THE BOOK ON COLIN POWELL—BY NICHOLAS LEMANN

THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 6, 1995 • $2.95

Where Do We Go From Here?

Black and White America after the Million Man March

by

The Editors

Glenn Loury

Orlando Patterson

Leon Wieseltier

Sean Wilentz

#BXBKDML ******* 3-DIGIT 757
#7575SABA111RY007# 012996
HO NWRE S00300
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE
ROY HAMMER LIB
PO BOX 111
BIG SANDY TX 75755

0 787 49140

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No one flies alone.

Aviation is a team sport. For example, people from the world's top airlines worked with us to develop the new 777—some for nearly 10 years. Next, we built a $100 million testing lab, a factory that cost even more, and the world's largest private computer network so our design/production team could work together no matter where each member lived. Teamwork and investment pay off. Before the first 777 was delivered, 144 were on order for some of the world's leading airlines. All of which suggests that, working together, we can do almost anything.

BOEING

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

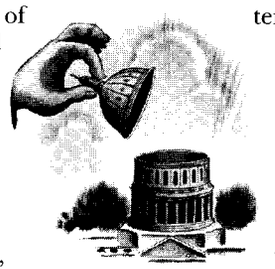
The gold standard

Central to the House Republicans' Contract with America is the distinction between government geared to "the people" and government geared to "special interests." "We are united here today, over 150 current members of the House and over 200 candidates, united in the belief that the people's House must be wrested from the grip of special interests and handed back to you, the American people," Dick Armey declared in September 1994 when he introduced the contract on the Capitol steps. That's good populist rhetoric, yet this year's Republican House has turned into a bacchanalia for special interests. It's the most lobby-driven Congress since the postbellum days when Jay Cooke and the railroad interests had free rein.

There are examples all over the place, in Republican-sponsored legislation governing everything from defense to telecommunications, to securities, to business tax relief. But my favorite for sheer perversity is a provision on Medical Savings Accounts, or MSAs, that the House leadership slipped into the Medicare bill. While House Republicans claim that "the Medicare Preservation Act of 1995" would save the federal program from imminent bankruptcy, this measure would actually *raise* Medicare costs—by $2.3 billion over seven years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. It is in the bill for only one reason—a successful five-year lobbying campaign by Indiana's Golden Rule Insurance Company.

Golden Rule is the kind of company that any reasonable national health care reform would have doomed to extinction. This $600 million corporation built its business by carefully choosing whom it would insure. *Consumer Reports* ranked it "near the bottom" of insurance companies because of its inadequate coverage, frequent rate increases and readiness to cancel policies. As it began to lose business in the '80s to insurance companies that sell managed care plans, it devised a plan for MSAs. Instead of buying a comprehensive insurance policy with a low deductible, or signing up with an HMO, a firm's employees would purchase a high-deductible catastrophic policy that would, say, only cover costs over $3,000. But the employer would also establish a medical savings account of $1,500 to pay for medical expenses. If healthy individuals spent less than $1,500 during the year, they could pocket the remainder.

Golden Rule touted MSAs as a way of keeping down medical costs by discouraging policy holders from purchasing health care. Doctors liked them because they weren't managed care. And young, healthy employees liked them because they might get money back. Most businesses, however, shied away because MSAs didn't save them any money. And policy experts like Stanford's Alain Enthoven scorned them because they undermined the logic of health insurance: they raised the costs of insurance for the potentially sickly by removing the young and healthy from the actuarial pool. They didn't actually reduce health costs, which are concentrated among the very sick. If anything, they raised them by discouraging people from getting preventive care and early treatment.



Failing in the market, Golden Rule and its chairman, Pat Rooney, did what any wily Republican does: they sought government help to boost their business. Rooney helped start and fund a Dallas think tank, the National Center for Policy Analysis, and a Washington lobby, the Council on Affordable Health Insurance, to promote MSAs as a panacea. Rooney, his executives and Golden Rule's PAC began throwing money at Congress, spending about $1.4 million in five years. Last year, they contributed more to the Republican National Committee than any other business. They funded not only Newt Gingrich, but also GOPAC and the Progress and Freedom Foundation.

In 1993, Phil Gramm, a recipient of Golden Rule largess, sponsored a bill that would have made MSAs the model for national health insurance. In the House, another Golden Rule beneficiary, Bill Archer, who would later become chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, introduced a measure to make the funds contributed to an MSA tax-deductible. Neither bill passed in the Democratic Congress, but when the Republicans took over last November Rooney and Golden Rule had reason to celebrate. Archer has put a deduction for MSAs in the tax bill. And the House leadership inserted a provision in the Medicare bill that would allow senior citizens to buy MSAs.

Here's how the Medicare MSA would work. Those seniors who don't want the normal low-deductible comprehensive coverage could sign up with an insurance company like Golden Rule for an MSA. The supposedly tottering Medicare fund would give Golden Rule what it determines to be the average cost of insurance—$5,081 per person in 1996. Golden Rule would then establish a policy with a deductible of $3,000 and set up a $1,500 MSA for the policyholder. Senior citizens would be liable for any cost between $1,500 and $3,000 and for a percentage of the charges over $3,000. If they became ill, they would lose money, but, with illness imminent, they could abandon the policy in favor of regular fee for service after only a year.

The Rooney-funded National Center claims that MSAs would save $220 billion of the $270 billion the Republicans want to cut in Medicare costs, but the Republican-appointed CBO completely disagrees. Indeed, the provision has no redeeming fiscal merit. Like MSAs in general, it would discourage preventive care and early treatment without bringing down the cost of high-tech medicine. And it would threaten the Medicare fund by siphoning off healthy seniors. Instead of paying only for what these Medicare recipients actually spend on health care, Medicare would have to pay the full $5,081—to Golden Rule and its ilk. Those standing to benefit would include healthy and wealthy seniors who could afford to gamble for a year, Golden Rule and similar insurance companies that had been locked out of the lucrative Medicare market and doctors who would escape the strictures of managed care and Medicare fee limits. The poor, the infirm and any American banking on a solvent Medicare system would lose out.

Both the proposal for a tax deduction for MSAs and for an MSA option within Medicare are expected to pass Congress this year, along with similar proposals that stem directly from lobbying efforts by doctors and pharmaceutical companies. On a party-line vote, the House Ways and Means Committee has already defeated Democratic attempts to strike or amend these proposals. If they do pass, and get through, they'll encourage the most inefficient and unsavory elements within the health care industry, setting back even further the cause of health care reform. Worse, passage of these proposals will demonstrate that in this Congress, it is moneyed interests and not the people who rule.

JOHN B. JUDIS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

NOVEMBER 6, 1995

AMBASSADOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,216

PO Box 111
Big Sandy, TX 75755

Cover by Eric Baker for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Articles on pages 9, 16, 18, 22 and 24.

4 **JOHN B. JUDIS** TRB: THE GOLD STANDARD How one insurance company hoodwinked Washington.

6 **CORRESPONDENCE** Computer quibbles, Jane Austen does L.A. &c.

9 **THE EDITORS** THE MAN AND THE MARCH The Day of Atonement's mixed messages.

10 **NOTEBOOK** Ranger Rick menaces America, Saddam squeaks by &c.

11 **HANNA ROSIN** ON THE HILL: STRANGE DAYS The GOP's immigration bill isn't crazy, but it's disturbing nonetheless.

13 **MATTHEW COOPER** WHITE HOUSE WATCH: PANETTA'S MOMENT Leon's been thrown the budget ball. Will he fumble?

14 **RICHARD STENGEL** NEW HAMPSHIRE POSTCARD: TENNESSEE WALKER On the road with Lamar Alexander, five aides, twenty reporters, three dogs and one flannel shirt.

16 **SEAN WILENTZ** BACKWARD MARCH Farrakhan has a spiritual father, and his name is Marcus Garvey.

18 **GLENN C. LOURY** ONE MAN'S MARCH The promise and peril of October 16.

22 **DEBRA DICKERSON** QUEEN FOR A DAY? A feminist skeptic embraces the march.

24 **ORLANDO PATTERSON** THE PARADOX OF INTEGRATION The protestations of their leaders notwithstanding, African Americans are becoming, by and large, better off and more integrated into our common culture. Ironically, it is this progress that fuels today's racial conflict.

28 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: SINS *The Scarlet Letter* is, unsurprisingly, an F. *Strange Days* explodes with visionary but empty energy; *Blue in the Face* has its moments.

30 **ROBERT BRUSTEIN** ON THEATER: ALICE IN WILSONLAND Robert Wilson comes home with a triumphant *Alice*; *The Food Chain* is inedible.

32 **NICHOLAS LEMANN** IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFER *My American Journey* by Colin L. Powell with Joseph E. Persico

36 **C.K. WILLIAMS** THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY *The Poet Dying: Heinrich Heine's Last Years in Paris* by Ernst Pawel

42 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** THE FLOATING WORLD *The Unconsoled* by Kazuo Ishiguro

44 **ROBERT PACK** POEM *Circle*

46 **LEON WIESELTIER** WASHINGTON DIARIST: BROTHERS

Editor-in-Chief and Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ

Editor
ANDREW SULLIVAN

Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER

Executive Editor
MARGARET TALBOT

Senior Editors
MATTHEW COOPER, ANN HULBERT, JOHN B. JUDIS, MICKEY KAUS, MICHAEL KINSLEY, CHARLES LANE, MICHAEL LEWIS, MICHAEL LIND, JAMES WOOD, ROBERT WRIGHT

Legal Affairs
JEFFREY ROSEN

Films
STANLEY KAUFFMANN

Theater
ROBERT BRUSTEIN

Poetry
MARK STRAND

Dance
MINDY ALOFF

Photography
LUC SANTE

Art
JED PERL

New Republic Books (Basic Books)
PAUL GOLOB

Contributing Editors
ELIOT A. COHEN, STANLEY CROUCH, JACOB HEILBRUNN, ANNA HUSARSKA, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, VINT LAWRENCE, DOUGLAS G. McGRATH, LOUIS MENAND, ROGER ROSENBLATT, MAGGIE SCARF, ROBERT SHAPIRO, RONALD STEEL, E.V. THAW, TOM TOLES, TATYANA TOLSTAYA, MICHAEL WALZER, JACOB WEISBERG, SEAN WILENTZ, ALAN WOLFE, C. VANN WOODWARD

Associate Editors
PETER BEINART, NADER MOUSAVIZADEH, HANNA ROSIN, RUTH SHALIT

Design Consultant
ERIC BAKER

Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY

Production Director
BRUCE STEINKE

Production Manager
HENRY RIGGS

Assistant Editors
DEBRA DUROCHER, JENNIFER BRADLEY

Literary Assistant
MELANIE REHAK

Reporter-Researchers
JONATHAN CHAIT, MICHAEL CROWLEY, STEPHEN GLASS, ELISSA SILVERMAN

President and Publisher
JOAN M. STAPLETON

Vice President
JAMES J. McCABE

Associate Publisher-Circulation
PEGGY JARVIS FERRIN

Associate Publisher-Advertising
JENNIFER BARRETT

Controller
CHRISTINA R. BONIFER

Circulation Manager
CECELIA M. STEPHENS

Marketing Manager
SHERI SHARMA

Accounting Assistants
JACQUELYN M. McCULLOUGH
JEANNINE DINGMAN

Advertising Assistant
CLAIRE P. STERN

Circulation Assistant
CAROLYN BERRY

Back Issues and Reception
MARGO JOHNSON

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 213, Number 19, Issue 4,216, November 6, 1995. (Printed in the U.S. on October 18, 1995.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 9 & 16, July 17 & 24, Aug. 21 & 28, and Sept. 18 & 25, 1995) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Advertising Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). © 1995 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: tnr@aol.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 602, Mount Morris, IL 61054. For subscription problems call 800-827-1289.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Future schlock

To the editors:

John B. Judis overestimates both Alvin and Heidi Toffler's prescience and the historical importance of the IBM personal computer ("Newt's Not-So-Weird Gurus," October 9). By the time *The Third Wave* was published in 1980, inexpensive microcomputers such as Radio Shack's TRS-80 and Apple's Apple II had invaded many American homes (as well as schools and workplaces). The Tofflers' predictions of the importance of home computers were made when the revolution was well underway, and IBM's eventual introduction of its PC cashed in on an already profitable market.

HARRY MCCRACKEN
Arlington, Massachusetts

Whitewash

To the editors:

Granted, Donald Graham's charge of TNR "segregationism" is both offensive and off-base. But so is your all-too-smug rejoinder, which conveniently skirts the crucial issue. Unless you have suddenly embraced *The Bell Curve*, you must believe that there are racial minorities who possess the skills, talents and abilities to serve on your editorial staff. Why haven't they done so? This isn't a question of "percentage-mongering" or quotas, it's a question of equal opportunity, a principle you claim to respect. Talented blacks and talented whites should have exactly the same chance to excel. But if blacks have fewer opportunities to demonstrate their talents, then you are enjoined—by your own principle—to make a special effort to find them. Graham's letter should have been an occasion for TNR to redouble this effort, not to revile it.

JONATHAN ZIMMERMAN
Narberth, Pennsylvania

Propeller heads

To the editors:

Michael Kinsley suggests that the Republicans owe the Clintons an apology for last year's criticism of health care reform. He cites "striking similarities" between the president's ill-fated Health Security Act and the House Republican's Medicare Preservation Act. Kinsley should note that apples and oranges have striking similarities as well.

The principal effect of the Clinton plan was to suffocate private-sector medicine with massive governmental intervention, while the House plan offers significant regulatory relief to an existing federal program which has been bogged in an increasingly sticky quagmire of bureaucratic ooze. Furthermore, the fuss over Clinton's health care task force meeting in secret was well founded and contributed significantly to the proposal's failure. Hillary Clinton's public forums to debate the issue all met after the plan was formulated, while the Republican plan was not developed until a series of open local town hall meetings and health care task forces had met. These task forces were comprised of Medicare beneficiaries, doctors, hospital administrators and health insurance representatives. In addition to a demand to enact regulatory relief for providers, Republicans were told at these meetings that the efficacy of managed care to create cost savings has yet to be demonstrated. It is for this reason that financial incentives for beneficiaries to enroll in HMOs were not included in the proposal. Ira Magaziner might have found this out for himself had he not locked himself up for a year in a room full of propeller heads.

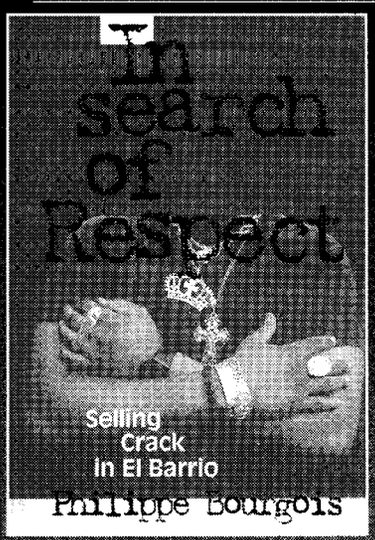
FRANK J. NEMEC
Las Vegas, Nevada

Central casting

To the editors:

John B. Judis's "Off center" (October 16) sheds light on what makes the political center so difficult to describe. It is a big step in the direction of weaning journalists from the traditional right-left spectrum, which is becoming increasingly inadequate to describe our political landscape. Conservatives want government to oversee our morals while keeping its hands off the economy (except for corporate welfare), while liberals favor government intervention in the economy but a hands-off attitude on social issues (except for some enforced political correctness). People who disagree with both are dumped into the center, but this "center" includes those who want government to do as little as possible as well as those who want it to fix both our economy and our morals. Worse for anyone who would try to unite this disparate group, even those who favor across-the-board government activism in no way agree on exactly what it is the government should do. When viewed on edge, from left to right, the center appears as a single point, but when viewed from

"...outstanding anthropology and great, even stunning reporting."
– *Tom Wolfe, author of* The Bonfire of the Vanities



In Search of Respect
Selling Crack in El Barrio
Philippe Bourgois

"...an intimate, disturbing portrait of an alternate world in which the crack-dealing and -using minority dominates public space."
– *Publishers Weekly*

"A poignant and riveting description of the violent world of crack dealers in East Harlem. Once I began reading this book I could not put it down....one of the most thought-provoking and insightful discussions of the nature and consequences of social marginalization in the inner-city ghetto."
– *William Julius Wilson, University of Chicago*

Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences 10
43518-8 Hardback $24.95

Available in bookstores or from

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211
Call toll-free 800-872-7423
MasterCard/VISA accepted. Prices subject to change.
Web site: http://www.cup.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

above, it is an axis whose ends are as far apart as the ends of the liberal-conservative axis. There's passion at the ends of this "center" axis, but the libertarian end hasn't enough people and the other, the populist/communitarian end, is just too diverse to form the basis of a coherent national party. Of course there is a true middle, equidistant from all four extremes, and I suspect a lot of people reside there, but that's precisely where passionate commitment is lacking. This is the problem a Colin Powell candidacy would face, and it appears to be insurmountable.

JOHN ANDREWS
Sag Harbor, New York

Water boy

To the editors:

If TNR's Robert Wright ("Some Like It Hot," October 9) continues to limit his global warming and ozone depletion research to Greenpeace smear sheets, he'll soon find himself in the embarrassing position of looking like a water boy for wacko activist groups.

Had Wright bothered to contact anyone at The Science & Environmental Policy Project, he would have been told that the Reverend Sun Myung Moon has never given "financial support" to SEPP and that my consulting for oil companies (on oil pricing) occurred more than a decade ago, during the oil crisis.

In the past two years, I have been repeatedly maligned by Greenpeace and other extreme groups for having in the past given talks at science conferences supported by the Unification Church (among the many dozens given elsewhere). Curiously, these groups have no problem with the fact that F. Sherwood Rowland, co-author of the CFC-ozone depletion theory, also accepted honoraria for speaking at a Unification Church-supported conference, as did Albert Gore.

The list of those who have published articles (and "received money" for them) in *The World & I* magazine and *The Washington Times*, both funded by the Unification Church, includes Bill Clinton and a host of U.S. senators and members of Congress.

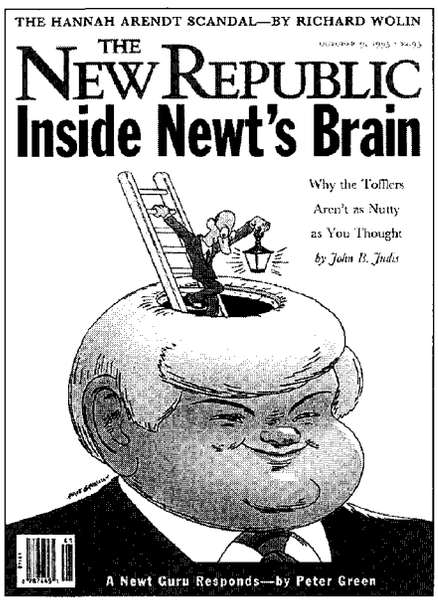
Clearly, many prominent government officials—even adherents of liberal politics and politically correct science—agree that these conferences and publications, despite their funding source, are legitimate forums for discussion. And so they are.

The Science & Environmental Policy Project—an independent, nonprofit policy research group—was incorporated in 1992 with the goal of focusing policymakers on the scientific basis for environmental action. Activist groups—like Greenpeace—are blowing smoke in hopes of avoiding a debate on the science. It won't work. The facts are that, on the global warming and ozone depletion issues, the current data do not support the scare stories—or the pricey policy prescriptions.

S. FRED SINGER
Fairfax, Virginia

Robert Wright replies:

In 1994 Dr. Singer told ABC News that SEPP had received free office space for a year from a group funded by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon. By my reckoning, that alone constitutes "financial support" from Reverend Moon, leaving aside the various Moonie-sponsored honoraria Dr. Singer has received. And



by the way, it's a bit misleading for Dr. Singer to act as if those honoraria signify no closer a connection to the Unification Church than that of someone who sells an article to the Moonie magazine *The World and I*. Dr. Singer is on the executive advisory board of *The World and I*.

Realcritik

To the editors:

Even though I share some of Jacob Heilbrunn's concerns about post-Kohl conservatism inn Germany, I was surprised at the tenor of his article on German foreign policy ("Springtime," October 16). Of course, there are many critical remarks that can be made on the new German *Realpolitik*. The author, however, restricts himself to criticizing that policy from a rather conservative, "realist" American perspective: Germany's foreign policy has to be looked upon skeptically because it is no longer necessarily congruent with American interests. But beyond that Heilbrunn does not give a convincing explanation why it should be troubling when German officials want the U.S. to reduce its spy contingent in the country, or when German foreign economic policy tries to expand Germany's influence in Russia, China, South East Asia and the Near East, as the U.S. tries to protect its economic interests in those parts of the world. Heilbrunn also does not tell us why we should be suspicious, as he insinuates we should, when Germany shifts some of its development funds from Israel to Palestinian water projects.

But not only the author's perspective seems problematic. Some of his arguments are contradictory. He first writes that Germany seeks to create its own sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe, expressly mentioning Estonia, only to state later that Germany wants to leave the Baltic States to Russia's sphere of influence. One should also not rely on the author when he identifies *Die Welt* and *Die Welt am Sonntag*, arguably among the most notorious conservative publications, as evidence that "mainstream" papers are embracing the neoconservative view.

Even from a narrow American realist perspective part of Heilbrunn's critique must be rebutted. Was it not the U.S. that urged Germany to assume more responsibility in security issues and to give up its rather pacifist approach? And was it not the U.S. that has been pushing Germany to provide aid to Egypt? Other allegations are supported by vague insinuations rather than conclusive evidence, e.g. when he implies that Germany attempts to undercut its nuclear non-proliferation obligations. The author switches from official German policy to the behavior of those German companies that provide Libya with chemical weapons technology. Such things may occur despite German export laws, which have become much more rigid in recent years.

MANFRED H. WIEGANDT
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Clued in

To the editors:

Stanley Kauffmann's October 9 article mentioned three Jane Austen films for this year: *Persuasion*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*. He should know that the movie *Clueless*, released earlier this year, is based on Austen's *Emma*. The plot's the same except for the translation into modern California youth culture.

BRUCE F. WONG
Wheaton, Illinois

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why Is Telecommunications Reform GOOD For Consumers?

More Choices

"Telecommunications reform will mean real consumer choice in cable, local phone service and long distance."

Jordan Clark
President
United Homeowners Association

Better Services

"For consumers with disabilities, a first priority is access to technology. Telecommunications reform legislation will ensure us that people with all kinds of disabilities will be able to use future information services and equipment."

Deborah Kaplan
Vice President
World Institute on Disability

Lower Prices

"Competition brings down prices. That's why the telecommunications reform bill makes such good sense for seniors."

Marta Sotomayor, Ph.D.
President and CEO
National Hispanic Council on Aging

More Jobs

"The telecommunications reform bill will help make America the world leader in communications technology and create thousands of 21st century jobs."

Daniel A. Ludwig
National Commander
American Legion

With open markets in telecommunications, there'll be one big winner: ***you.***

That's why these groups and many others support the landmark telecommunications legislation that's now before a House-Senate Conference Committee.

Because by opening cable, local phone service and long distance to competition, consumers will have ***more choices, better services*** – even ***lower prices.***

But for this to happen, Congress must first finish the job. The time to pass telecommunications reform is ***now.***

It'll Open Up A Whole New World

Paid for by the Alliance for Competitive Communications

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 6, 1995

THE MAN AND THE MARCH

October 16, 1995, was a beautiful day in the nation's capital. Under a crisp and clear autumn sky, 400,000 black men of all ages gathered soberly and somberly to reflect on the plight of their people and to rededicate themselves to ending that plight. But October 16 was also an ugly day in the nation's capital, and a sad one. It was ugly because the indisputable leader of the Million Man March was Louis Farrakhan, a man whose presence and power is an affront to all who genuinely seek a color-blind, and color-just, America. And it was a sad day because it testified, with the power of 400,000 raised fists, to the absence of any authority, among those, black or white, who claim to speak honestly about race in America.

In the days and weeks leading up to the march, there was much talk of separating the message from the messenger. In fact, it is difficult to imagine one without the other. But during a long day of warm greetings and expressions of brotherhood, nothing seemed as alien to the crowd as Farrakhanism itself. After all, the loudest applause of the day was reserved for Rosa Parks, the emblem of a spirit and a struggle that shares nothing with Farrakhan's. And looking over the sea of African American men who had joined in Washington from all parts of the nation, it was difficult not to be moved, and encouraged, by the spirit of dedication and commitment that their very presence displayed.

But at the end of the day it was Louis Farrakhan who spoke, and Louis Farrakhan who brought the dedicated masses to Washington. As Farrakhan himself exulted in one of his more boastful chronologies, "It would be silly to separate Moses from the Torah or Jesus from the Gospel or Mohammed from the Koran." Sadly, then, the messenger *is* the message, and if his heart is not pure, the messenger taints the message. And if history matters, this messenger's heart is hateful. He is a crackpot bigot, an unredeemable anti-Semite and a homophobe. These are not just his sins of the past. Only one month ago, he was reported calling Jews "bloodsuckers" because they run stores in black neighborhoods. When the tape surfaced, he protested that once again the media had tangled his words. What he really said was that "Jews, Palestinian Arabs, Koreans and Vietnamese" are all bloodsuckers.

At the march, Farrakhan avoided the topic of "bloodsuckers." Instead, he toned down the hatred, inviting Jews to a truce and assuring whites he meant "white supremacists," not all white people. But on that day, his olive branch for whites was not the main issue. More important was his message to blacks, and here was the real problem. Farrakhan's appeal to black men to take responsibility for their predicament may have been sincere, as he admonished them for everything from carjacking to wife-beating, and led them in a pledge to "improve spiritually, morally, mentally." But just as Farrakhan makes blacks see their flaws, his rhetoric paralyzes them, preventing them from correcting those flaws. His vision of black economic autarky is a dead end. His idea of the black family is outdated and inegalitarian in the extreme. His message is: yes, we are killing each other, but that is because blacks have suffered 400 years of oppression, because George Washington was a slave-owner, because the Masonic order works its occult wizardry, because racism is an indelible stain not just on the fabric of American society but also on the cosmic order. When racism is as inescapable as the motion of the planets, then the will of one man is powerless to overcome it.

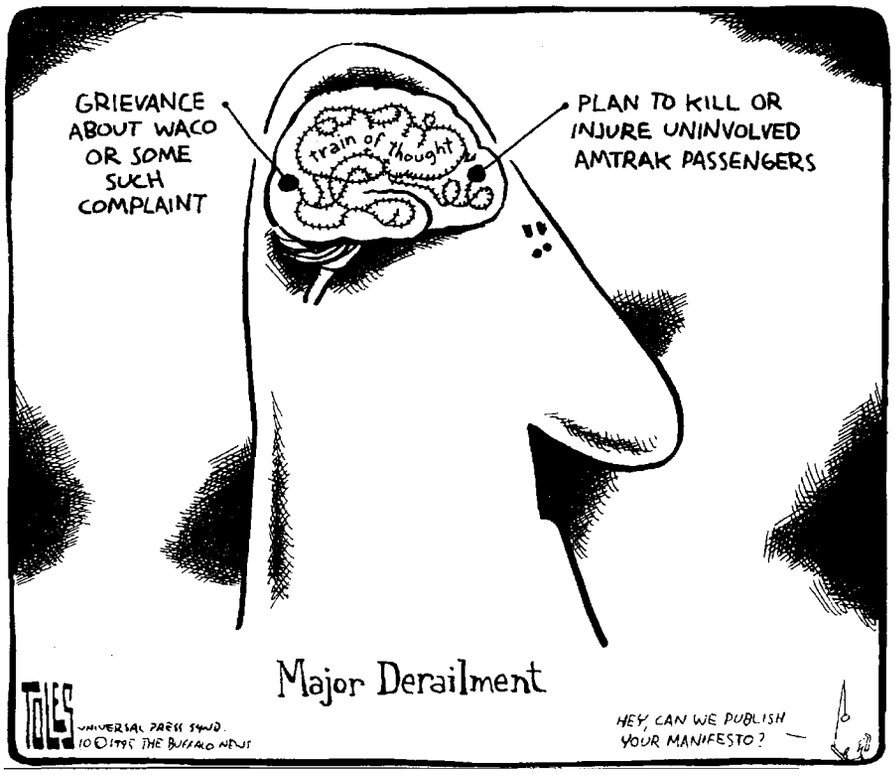
If there is no disputing the foulness of Farrakhan, then there is equally no disputing the thirst for solidarity and for renewal that he so effectively tapped into. What is also true is that Farrakhan's path to Washington was paved with the indifference of whites about how to deal with the blight in black America. None of the Republican presidential candidates has spoken about race at any length or with any genuine concern, and there can be no doubt that this Congress is more hostile to the needs of poor blacks than any since King's march on Washington. Belatedly, but forcefully, the president offered a call for a united America on the same day as the march, frankly addressing blacks with the statistics of death and devastation in their communities, and frankly asking whites how they would feel if the men and women behind those numbers were white, and not black.

Farrakhan cited the Kerner Commission's conclusion that this nation was moving toward two Americas—one black, one white, separate and unequal. The aftermath of the Simpson trial and the Million Man March have made clear the persistence of this divide. What is equally clear, however, is that Farrakhan's message is a call only for a more separate, more unequal America. At this point in our nation's racial politics, we would be wise to remember the landmark decision of another era, another struggle: that separate is always and everywhere, "inherently," unequal. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: Vendors sold Million Man March candy bars during Monday's event.... Officials closed the C Street entrance of the Hart Senate Office Building after identifying a suspicious package, which, when opened, turned out to contain an espresso machine.... Twenty-five Danish high-school students, who visited Paris wearing t-shirts that read "Chirac, non!" in protest against the French president's support for nuclear testing, were forced by police to take off the shirts and placed under surveillance at their hotel.... Asked after a New Hampshire candidate forum to compare his performance with that of his rivals, Bob Dole said, "I showed up. That's a win with that group." ... Unhappy at being greeted as "General," Attorney General Janet Reno said that she prefers "Ms. Reno, Janet, whatever you like.... Hey you.... I've been called worse." ... Comic-strip characters Blondie and Dagwood will soon visit a marriage counselor.


GRIEVANCE ABOUT WACO OR SOME SUCH COMPLAINT
train of thought
PLAN TO KILL OR INJURE UNINVOLVED AMTRAK PASSENGERS
Major Derailment
TOLES
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYND.
10©1995 THE BUFFALO NEWS
HEY, CAN WE PUBLISH YOUR MANIFESTO?

RANGER RICK: Minister Louis Farrakhan, a fan of numerology, is angry at the National Park Service and its numbers. He accuses it of grossly underestimating the size of the crowd at the Million Man March. Farrakhan sees racism in the count and, like any good litigious American, he has announced that he will sue. While he's at it, we hope that he'll unveil the Park Service's sinister role in covering up the murder of Vincent Foster and its command of the black helicopters that threaten ranchers and militia members everywhere. Only the truth can stop Bruce Babbitt's quest for world domination. Of course, some of you may think of the Interior Department as the best of government—guides who show you the beauties of Yosemite, geologists who regulate mineral development in the Southwest, rangers who answer questions at the Martin Luther King Jr. historical site in Atlanta. Thank goodness that Farrakhan, along with the white right, has unveiled the evil that lurks in the heart of Ranger Rick.

MANAGED CARE: Much of the wacky conspiracy talk at the Million Man March might be dismissed as relatively harmless. Minister Louis Farrakhan's nutty numerology, for instance—a black reawakening based on the height of national monuments?—must have had limited practical meaning to its audience. The quackery of Nation of Islam Minister of Health Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad must, unfortunately, be taken seriously. Muhammad is the promoter of the miracle drug Kemron, marketed by the Nation of Islam as a cure for AIDS, but dismissed as fraudulent by the World Health Organization and the National Institutes of Health. Muhammad wowed the gathering by trotting out a man who claimed to have gone from HIV-positive to HIV-negative in a year, thanks to Kemron. He then charged the white establishment with ignoring the drug so that AIDS would continue to ravage black America. Muhammad has made these claims before. But never have they enjoyed such a wide audience. Increased suspicion of doctors and hospitals can hardly be good for black Americans, who are already getting less preventive care than their white counterparts. If he convinces the HIV-positive to forgo other treatments for the ineffective—and not inexpensive—Kemron, Muhammad will have only increased black misery. Let's hope October 16's congregants reject both the Nation of Islam's health care message and its messenger.

COBB TIES: Last month, House Speaker Newt Gingrich decried New York City as a "culture of waste," shamefully dependent on federal dollars to fund the city's welfare rolls and social programs. What a surprise, then, when *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported that Cobb County, Georgia, the Speaker's home district, received over 4,000 more federal dollars per resident last year than the moochers in New York. In fact, for every federal tax dollar collected, Cobb County gets back $1.80 from Washington, whereas New York City

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reaps a modest 82 cents. And, while the Speaker vows to get Washington out of the way so that local entrepreneurship can thrive, it is Washington's largess, in the form of funds for highways, public transportation and water and sewage systems, which has helped Cobb blossom from a bedroom community into a thriving Atlanta suburb. More than half of Cobb's current funding comes from defense contracts. Might the Speaker see in Cobb's experience with Keynesianism any lessons for New York, with its strapped infrastructure and crumbling institutions? Probably not. For, while Cobb has the misfortune of being subject to brutal and dehumanizing big government Keynesianism, New York has the good fortune to receive from Newt's Congress the freedom from overweening government intrusion for which every municipality yearns.

CAFE CULTURE: Senate and House members began this week to reconcile competing versions of the Department of Transportation appropriations bill. Among the welter of semantic differences and arcane highway policies is an environmental rule—called CAFE—that, if frozen, would save thousands of lives each year. Currently, the regulation requires light trucks—such as minivans and jeeps—to average 20.7 miles per gallon. Auto analysts expect the Transportation Department to substantially raise this standard unless the appropriations bill freezes it. If efficiency standards are raised, manufacturers will almost certainly reduce the amount of steel in cars, continuing a two-decade trend. Since 1975, the average weight of a new car has dropped by about 1,000 pounds, about half of which can be attributed to CAFE standards. A 1989 Brookings Institute study and a more recent analysis by the Competitive Enterprise Institute demonstrate that CAFE downsizing, which makes cars less able to withstand crashes, translates into 2,600 to 4,500 additional traffic deaths each year. While the House bill freezes the fuel efficiency rate, the Senate, caving to an odd alliance of oil companies (which fear CAFE will be replaced with a $1.50 gas tax hike) and environmentalists, has preserved the twenty-year-old rule. This is one of this year's rare moments when the House has acted more sensibly than the Senate and a potential GOP reform serves the public interest. We take our proud place among the foot soldiers of the Revolution.

WILSON REDUX: Completing a full 360-degree turn, Majority Leader Bob Dole admitted last week that his staff had erred in returning a $1,000 check that it had earlier accepted from the gay group Log Cabin Republicans. In his original reversal, Dole claimed that he could not accept money from an organization whose political agenda was "fundamentally at odds" with his own. At the time, Dole's spokesman defended his earlier acceptance of donations from Time Warner—whose executives the senator had attacked for having "sold your souls ... debase[d] the nation, and threaten[ed] our children"—on the grounds that it advocated a "diverse portfolio of issues." The distinction was absurd. The Log Cabin Republicans exist precisely because they agree with every element of the Republican agenda *except* its opposition to gay rights. Time Warner, on the other hand, *is* a single interest group—and its single interest, unmitigated corporate profit, is just what Dole so famously condemned on moral grounds. (Dole took Time Warner money well before the company divested itself of the gangsta rap label Interscope.) Dole was no more convincing in reversing this reversal last week, arguing that he had been "unaware" of the decision to turn down Log Cabin. Maybe he'd be better off admitting that the principle uniting these decisions was simple political expediency.

LANDSLIDE: Saddam Hussein has been re-elected president of Iraq by a margin of 99.96 percent. We extend our condolences to the .04 percent.

FALL BOOK SIZZLER:

Essays in Canadian Surface Transportation

(Available from the Fraser Institute, Vancouver, B.C.)

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT: TNR is proud to announce the publication of Michael Kinsley's new book, *Big Babies* (William Morrow Press). *Big Babies* includes many columns published in these pages during Michael's time as author of TRB. •

ON THE HILL

STRANGE DAYS

By Hanna Rosin

America is being invaded by the strangest of aliens, and by now, almost every member of Congress has had a personal encounter. John Bryant's left such an impression that he invoked it three times during the Judiciary Committee's mark-up of the latest immigration bill. "If you fly into National Airport today and try to get a taxi here in Washington, D.C., you will not be picked up by a taxi driven by an African American, or one driven by a Hispanic-American or one driven by an Irish-American.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

You'll be picked up by someone who is from a place much farther away and who does not have native roots in this country."

It's not just a big-city plague, either. "My home state of Tennessee has experienced many problems with aliens," Republican John Duncan complained to the House task force on illegal immigration. "One of my constituents in the small town of Maryville, Tennessee, was involved in an automobile accident with an illegal alien," said the horrified Southerner. "We need to let the local sheriffs bring these aliens to justice."

The task force was convened by Speaker Newt Gingrich earlier this year and stocked with angry Californians. After a whirlwind tour of INS sites in Miami, New York and San Diego, its members drew up a blueprint for "the largest voluntary deportation in the history of the world," as the final report boasted. The bulk of the "voluntary" incentives were spin-offs of Proposition 187, California's notorious ballot initiative to deny schooling and medical care to illegal immigrants. Hitting on a new un-American activity, a few members would deny birthright citizenship to the hapless children of pregnant women who scurry across the border just in time to unload. "It's an outrageous abuse of the innocence of childhood," wailed New Jersey Republican Marge Roukema in the final report. "These criminals come here to prey on American citizens."

So far, none of this spleen venting has made it into the House bill, an omnibus sponsored by Texas Republican Lamar Smith (although Roukema may be waiting for the floor debate, when the C-SPAN cameras roll in). In fact, the spookiest part of the bill has nothing to do with illegal immigration. On that front, it has several helpful provisions: the bill remedies a longstanding Republican hypocrisy on punishing employers who hire illegal immigrants. As it stands now, any immigrant can buy a fake green card for $30 and show it to his boss, who'll claim he couldn't tell it was phony. Smith's bill sets up a 1-800 number for employers to check Social Security numbers, making it harder for them to play dumb. It also streamlines the asylum process so that hopeful newcomers aren't handed a number and told to show up one year later, when, surprise, 95 percent don't make it. Other provisions buy early Christmas toys for INS agents: shiny new tanks, helicopters, night goggles, pocketscopes and 5,000 more friends to share them with.

But Smith's gift-giving hit its limit with legal immigrants. For more than a decade, both he and Alan Simpson, the sponsor of the Senate immigration bill, have waited for the right moment to nudge the gates closed. Now the mood has arrived, and they've crafted the largest cut in immigration since the 1924 National Origins Act. What the bill does is push spouses and children of Americans up on the waiting list, under the mantle of nuclear family reunification: "A vote against reform is a vote to keep 1 million moms and dads and kids separated," goes the heartwarming appeal. But they then set an annual cap of 330,000 family-sponsored immigrants, effectively eliminating all the other waiting lists for adult children, brothers and sisters. On top of that, they cut down the number of refugees and work-sponsored immigrants. By their own proud estimates, this will decrease the total number by a whopping 25 percent, from roughly 800,000 to 600,000, by the end of the century.

This stinginess is fueled by the belief that the latest wave of immigrants are welfare sponges, less hardy than the pioneers of the golden age who sweated and broke their backs in the mines and shipyards. "Immigrants who came at the turn of the century worked to make America the great country that it is," muses Smith. "But now things have changed. I read a *New York Times* article which quotes an immigrant who says he came to America because there is free money here. It's never been so bad." Simpson's bill goes so far as to threaten deportation for legal immigrants who make "excessive use of welfare" in their first five years.

But like most bootstrap myths this one leaves a few things out. True, the number of immigrants on welfare has increased in the last decade. But this is almost entirely due to refugees from war-torn countries like Afghanistan and Cambodia who arrive with no resources and no relatives. For non-refugees, welfare use has decreased, and at a far faster pace than for natives. A recent Urban Institute study shows, for example, that working-age, non-refugee immigrants are less likely than natives to be on welfare. And our grandfathers weren't quite as sturdily self-sufficient as we thought they were. As Frederick Rose pointed out recently in *The Wall Street Journal*, more than half of public welfare recipients in 1909 were immigrant families, "making new arrivals three times more likely than natives to be on the public dole."

Luckily, a generous spirit has wafted in from strange quarters. In a rare display of high-level sparring, House Majority Leader Dick Armey took up the cause of the campesinos. "I'm hard-pressed to think of a single problem that would be solved by shutting off the supply of willing and eager new Americans," he told a gathering at the Cato Institute in May. This benevolence is partly driven by instinctive fear of hampering business: more than anything, it's the 1-800 number that sparks libertarian nightmares of a hostile government takeover. "I don't think I was sent here to add to the power of Big Brother or to put further burdens on hard-working American citizens," righteous freshman Steve Chabot, an Armey ally, puts it. "This scheme represents an unprecedented intrusion of the federal government into every hiring decision in the country." Nonetheless, their free-market fervor seems the only hope these days for keeping the gates open: "We are all immigrants or children of immigrants," writes Armey in *The Freedom Revolution*, "and it does us no credit to pull up the ladder behind us and sneer at the immigrants of the present day." •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PANETTA'S MOMENT

By Matthew Cooper

Bill Clinton was being treated to the good side of Newt Gingrich. When congressional leaders gathered at the White House in July for a dinner devoted to foreign affairs, the Speaker was, recalls a top Clinton official, like Wellington opining on world affairs. Gingrich lamented those Republicans who would slash contributions to the U.N. "We have to find a way to get more of them to travel abroad," Gingrich said.

Clinton officials wish this was the Newt Gingrich they dealt with all the time—statesmanlike, bipartisan. Alas, they know better. "It's like Wellington, yes, but Wellington leading the Huns," says the Clinton official, disparaging Gingrich's House. And it is in the fight over the budget that Gingrich most resembles not a British statesman but a German Vandal.

Clinton aides are buoyed by polls—including private numbers garnered by Clinton pollsters Mark Penn and Doug Schoen—that show the Republicans hemorrhaging. The public finds the GOP's cuts too extreme, Gingrich too rabid. "It's like health care," says another Clinton pollster, Stanley Greenberg. "People are concerned. They feel the process is moving too fast." White House officials know, however, that their joyride could also come to a screeching halt: if the budget deal collapses, the president will suffer.

More than anyone in the West Wing, Leon Panetta is responsible for making sure Clinton comes out on top. Of course, in any administration, the chief of staff would play a determining role in budget negotiations. But Panetta comes to the table immersed in the minutiae of reconciliation, appropriation and other buzzwords of the budget morass. In the '80s, Panetta chaired the House Budget Committee; in the '90s, he directed the Office of Management and Budget, where his deficit hawkishness led ex-Clinton adviser Paul Begala to tell Bob Woodward that Panetta was "the Poster Boy for Economic Constipation."

These days, at the very least, Panetta is a poster boy for stamina. Each workday morning is consumed by the budget. At the 7:30 a.m. senior staff meeting, Panetta can be seen at the long table in his West Wing office, near photos of the tumultuous coastline of his native Monterey, California, and a photo of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* director Frank Capra visiting the Lincoln Memorial. With a yellow legal pad before him, Panetta begins each meeting with foreign affairs, a tip of the hat to cold war tradition. But the second, more pressing topic is invariably the budget, and it is here that Panetta is making his mark. "He's the field general," says Clinton adviser George Stephanopoulos. That may be an exaggeration, but on many fronts Panetta leads the charge. When it comes to negotiating with the Hill, Panetta is the man to see. The coordination of administration efforts—from crunching numbers to staging events like a recent Clinton phone call to rural leaders to bemoan GOP cuts—is under Panetta's purview. This is the Panetta moment.

Whether Panetta will be given authority to cut deals himself remains uncertain. "We did the negotiating with Leon," says a senior Republican, recalling the rescissions bill that passed earlier this year. "But when it came down to the final deal we dealt with Clinton, Gore, Hillary, everyone but Socks." Panetta knows that Clinton, who kept him in the dark about the key role of adviser Dick Morris, is a coy arbiter who seeks counsel far and wide, revealing his hand only after hinting at his agreement.

Even if he were given carte blanche, Panetta faces a Congress and a president who remain worlds apart. Crash-and-burn scenarios being war-gamed at the White House take on more credence. Clinton could well veto a reconciliation bill that cuts Medicare too much or ends signature programs like his expanded Earned Income Tax Credit.

Most observers have blamed this budget stalemate on ideology, but the hidden burr is memory. For Panetta and Gingrich, the budget battle is shadowed by the recollection of the 1990 budget summit when George Bush abandoned his no-new-taxes pledge. At a closed door meeting at Andrews Air Force Base near Washington, the two squared off. Panetta, then House Budget Chairman, cut the deal. Gingrich walked out, the sole dissenter. "He sat in the back of the room reading the newspaper," recalls one Democrat who was at Andrews. "We knew he wouldn't come along." To this day, Panetta sees 1990 as a triumph of responsibility. That is not surprising. Panetta, a Republican who turned Democrat in 1971—an era when such things actually happened—is like another ex-Republican, Bob Kerrey: he still has a fiscal conservative streak. (Panetta, a Nixon-era official, bolted the GOP over civil rights, not economics.) No wonder Tip O'Neill felt the avuncular Californian insufficiently loyal and blocked him, for a time, from chairing the House Budget Committee. Panetta, thus, recalls the 1990 deal with pride, a model of fiscal sanity. (Most Democrats celebrate the Andrews agreement because it forced Bush to flip-flop.) Panetta, who wishes Bush had defended their deal, longs for a bipartisan era. "In the past you had people like Tom Foley, George Mitchell or for that matter Bob Dole or Bob Michel who in the end were more interested in making the process work," Panetta told me. "They would never have contemplated defaulting on the debt ceiling."

Today, though, it is a rougher era, perhaps less suited to Panetta-style geniality. The House, after all, is now led by someone who recalls his 1990 dissent as his finest,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Churchillian hour. Indeed, Gingrich's famed *cri de coeur* at Andrews catapulted him from gadfly to Speaker; it enshrined him in GOP mythology as the first to predict and distance himself from the Bush demise. When he visited the White House in September, Gingrich stood in the Cabinet Room, pointing to the spot where, in 1990, he told Bush that the Andrews deal "was the biggest disaster of your presidency." Clintonites pray that the Speakership has tamed Gingrich. "Now, Gingrich *is* Bush. He has to deal," says a top Clinton adviser. Perhaps. But many Republicans think that Gingrich would relish walking again, leaving Leon and his legal pad in the lurch. •

NEW HAMPSHIRE POSTCARD

TENNESSEE WALKER

By Richard Stengel

With his head held straight, his shoulders thrown back and his hips thrust forward, Lamar Alexander does not so much march as saunter. Even on an Indian summer afternoon, he doesn't perspire, and the occasional honks of irritated drivers never seem to ruffle his air of a man taking a stroll on his way to the White House.

In his quest for the Republican presidential nomination, the former governor of Tennessee is walking across New Hampshire. "From Concord to the sea," he says with a winning smile, "the long way." At a clip of three or four miles a day (with two or three such constitutionals a month), he has covered eighty miles thus far and has about eight to go. The walk is meant to replicate his 1978 gubernatorial campaign, when he hiked 1,000 miles across Tennessee in a red-and-black plaid shirt.

At 8:00 one morning last week, dressed in khakis and The Shirt, he set out from the Rockingham County Courthouse in Exeter for a walk of a little more than four miles. He led a troupe that included about twenty supporters, five aides (three of them crossovers from Ollie North's Senate campaign), a dozen or so reporters (including one fellow from Nashville who referred to Alexander as "Laymar") and three dogs (one of which, a German shepherd, sported a matching red-and-black kerchief).

Alexander walked against the traffic and hadn't been on the road two minutes when a motorist slowed his car, peered out his window and said with some disappointment, "Sorry, I thought you were Charles Kuralt or something." No matter, it's a fine day for a walk.

The New Hampshire primary is routinely designated ground zero for retail presidential campaigning, and it's hard to get more retail than Alexander's march. Lamar's strategists divide his walks into "residential" and "commercial" days, the former taking him through quiet, tree-shaded lanes and the latter through shops and strip malls. Alexander reckons he shakes a couple of hundred hands a day.

That first morning, Lamar made house calls. At one place after another, he jauntily walked up the driveway, rang the doorbell and said, "Hello, I'm Lamar Alexander, and I want to be your next president." After encountering a few empty houses, he took a detour and stopped in at a retirement home in an Exeter executive park.

The living room was dim and wood-paneled, with about a dozen octogenarians in overstuffed furniture taking morning tea. He was introduced by the home's director, and Governor Alexander promptly informed them he was walking across the state. "Aren't you exhausted?" asked a blue-haired matron in a querulous voice. The old folks were curious, but they were a tough, mostly Democratic audience. "If you were sitting across from the president this morning," Alexander asked them, "and you could say one thing to him, what would it be?" "Bravo!" croaked a codger standing by the window.

Lamar's earnest, good humor never deserted him: he actually appears to enjoy retail campaigning. His easy smile and courtly manners give him the best disposition of the candidates—an asset he alluded to a couple of months ago when he described Phil Gramm as "too grumpy" to be president. In fact, Alexander's campaign seems to be based on the assumption that, when Bob Dole begins to grate on voters, they will turn to that appealing fellow in the red-and-black shirt. With his Southern-lite accent, his moderate manner and his unobjectionable theme of personal responsibility, Lamar Alexander is the Easy Listening Republican.

Yet, just as Alexander's prole work-shirt cloaks a millionaire investor, his folksy demeanor hides a sharp tongue. He is adept at damning with faint praise. He has said that Dole is a deserving man, "like Everett Dirkson, but he doesn't give off the feel of a man to lead America into the next century." He smiles even as he inserts the knife. When a photographer on the walk has intruded on the governor for the umpteenth time, Alexander remarks, "I get it, you guys take enough pictures until you get one really bad one."

On Lamar's one-man march, the famous shirt does symbolic double-duty. It's meant, first of all, to be a sartorial emblem of his "outsider-ness," which is the leitmotif of Alexander's campaign. "It's hard to change the culture of Washington," he says, "if you are the culture of Washington" (i.e., you won't catch Bob Dole in a flannel shirt). And there's something else: Alexander has an unenviable tendency to blend into a crowd. The shirt helps him stand out.

In his stump speech, Alexander avows, "I think the first president of the next century needs to be a little bit of a preacher." But, in the presidential preacher sweepstakes, Lamar is running behind Alan Keyes, Pat

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Monopolies Win, You Lose.

People are speaking out against the telecommunications bills passed this past summer by the Senate and the House.

People who are concerned about higher prices, less competition, and fewer voices being heard. People outside the telecommunications industry.

People who favor deregulation -- but believe we're missing an historic opportunity to do it right. Here's a sampling:

USA TODAY "Monopolies win, you lose."

The Boston Globe "...consumers...were short-changed in the legislative process."

The Sacramento Bee "...the bill leaves the Baby Bells...with too much power to choke off competition and raise rates to local customers in order to subsidize their ventures into the long-distance field... this bill appears to tolerate levels of concentration that could effectively drive out any diversity in opinion or information in certain communities."

The New York Times "... it risks putting local phone companies in a position to drive rivals out of business ...it could also end up concentrating control of the main media outlets -- newspaper, TV and radio -- in too few hands... In rural areas, under this bill, a powerful media magnate could buy up *every* source of news, including the local phone company."

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH "Prices would rise... [It] goes much too far."

The Oregonian "...a single owner could control all the media outlets and communications links in a given market -- a scary monopoly."

THE DENVER POST "If the current bill becomes law, phone prices may rise and consumers will have fewer -- not more -- choices."

WORCESTER TELEGRAM & GAZETTE "...the legislation would extend the monopolistic control of the seven Regional Bell Operating Companies...by permitting them to enter the long-distance marketplace *before* they are forced to face local telephone service competition from long-distance carriers or cable companies."

The Philadelphia Inquirer "Slow down in deregulating the info highway, or the public will get run over."

BusinessWeek "If Congress really wants a free phone market, with the competition and lower prices that will come with it, it shouldn't be quite so generous to those local monopolists, the Baby Bells."

THE TENNESSEAN "...the problem with the bill is that it removes most telephone and cable rate restrictions without first assuring that competition is in place."

The Seattle Times "...the bill would intensify the communications industry's instinct to monopolize markets and raise prices."

the Charleston Gazette The State Newspaper "...the bill trashes long-time rules that have restricted concentration of media ownership... Deregulation and 'reform' have increasingly become code words for freeing huge corporations from the government oversight that prevents them from gouging the public and developing stifling monopolies."

Chicago Business Crain's "...the telecommunications bill winding its way through Congress would maintain local phone service monopolies in Chicago, and most of the rest of the country..."

Chicago Sun-Times "Until the public is convinced that its interests are being served, special interest legislation can well wait on hold."

Detroit Free Press "This bill would tilt the field even further in favor of existing cable TV and phone companies. In the end, the trick would be on consumers."

The Competitive Long Distance Coalition

CompTel AT&T LDDS WORLDCOM MCI Sprint cwa tra ACTA

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Buchanan and even Phil Gramm. Alexander's style is more like that of a suave Episcopalian cleric who turns up his nose at embarrassing concepts like God. In fact, Alexander is a JFK Republican: his underlying message is, vote for me because I'm smarter, more efficient and much more charming than those other guys.

Alexander resists the label of moderate, but his message modulates the electric-fence rhetoric of some of his rivals and mirrors his kinder, gentler manner. He has called Phil Gramm and Bob Dole mean-spirited for suggesting that legal immigrants be denied government benefits. And, in one of the campaign's more pointed formulations, Alexander says, "You should not condemn racial preferences without at the same time condemning racial discrimination."

On one recent morning, Lamar stopped to talk to two classes of sixth-graders who had assembled on the grass outside North Hampton's pretty clapboard Town Hall. This former Secretary of Education does not scold them for playing hooky. "I'm sorry you all had to get out of school for this," he says and laughs good-naturedly. He started by taking a few questions. Freckle-faced girl: "Do you like walking?" Boy with a moptop: "Don't your feet hurt?" While the kids squirm and look in all directions, Lamar hits them with an abridged version of his stump speech. "You're going to have to rely less on Washington and more on yourselves," he tells them sternly. As they say in Vegas, he's too hip for the room.

He then tells another story that is now a stock element in his set remarks. "Last year," he informed the kids, "the federal government passed a law setting out a weapons policy for every school in New Hampshire. I carried a pocket knife to school with me in Maryville every day when I was a boy. If you bring a weapon to school, it's your parents' responsibility to do something about it, not Washington." Aside from the fact that these kids were more likely to be packing lollipops than Uzis, the story is an example of a certain disingenuousness in Alexander's stump speech.

In general, Alexander wants to send everything back to the states that can be sent back to the states. But he knows that the Supreme Court overturned the law in question. And he knows that Congress didn't pass it to keep rural Huck Finns from taking their Swiss Army knives to school. Alexander supports gun control in the schools; he just wants the local or state authorities to pass it. By that logic, he'd oppose the Golden Rule if it were pushed on localities by Washington.

At the same time that Alexander rails against Washington, he advocates a strong chief executive. "It's an unnatural act that the Speaker of the House is setting the national agenda and not the president," he asserts again and again. Now, let's see, would he prefer that Bill Clinton be setting that agenda?

If Newt Gingrich did not exist, Alexander's campaign would certainly not invent him. Alexander decided to run for president before the 1994 elections, which essentially robbed him of many of his issues. His biggest applause line used to be, "Cut their pay and send them home." Now, the enemy is us. He still says his biggest priority is to balance the budget. What Alexander has been reduced to saying is, it will take an outsider like me to finish the revolution. The '94 elections have essentially put Alexander in the position of the French revolutionist who looked out his window one day to see a mob marching by. "There go the people," he exclaimed, "I must hurry up and lead them."

In the meantime, Lamar keeps on trucking. At the end of his second day on the road, he walked into a pharmacy and called out cheerfully, "Got any foot powder?"

RICHARD STENGEL is a Contributor at *Time* magazine.

Echoes of Marcus Garvey.

BACKWARD MARCH

By Sean Wilentz

During the days preceding Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March, it was hard to avoid feeling as if a dramatic historical rupture was occurring. For more than half a century, since A. Philip Randolph proposed a march on Washington in 1941, the civil rights movement had seemed to follow a consistent course, planning periodic mass demonstrations in the capital and petitioning the federal government to help end racial discrimination and improve blacks' economic plight. The movement's message varied over the years, from demands for "jobs and freedom" in the historic march of 1963, to demands for widening the War on Poverty in the Poor People's March in 1968, to the less-focused appeals of the Martin Luther King commemoration marches in 1983, 1988 and 1993. But always, the guiding spirit of the demonstrations was integrationist and, broadly speaking, social democratic.

By contrast, the Million Man demonstration would be explicitly anti-integrationist, and would petition the government for nothing. Rejecting the political legacy of Randolph and King while claiming to uphold it, the march promised to be many other things: a therapeutic moral revival, a call for something called "black male unity," an O.J. Simpson victory party, and for some (as co-organizer Benjamin Chavis reminded everyone a few days before the event) a chance to elevate the racist Farrakhan and his estimated 20,000-member Nation of Islam to the status of black America's leading spiritual and political messengers.

What actually happened was both impressive and dismaying. The midday sight of so many ordinary black Americans thronging the U.S. Capitol in a calm but festive mood, hungering for some inspiring oratory, struck a hopeful note. Television shots of the orderly, purpose-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ful crowd brought a welcome dose of realism about the vast majority of American blacks. There were few noticeable references to the Simpson trauma; from the podium came the usual mélange of messages ranging from attacks on the Republicans to self-help spiritualism, while the assembled marchers chatted and hugged and hung out. But in the end, the crowd quieted down for the day's featured speaker, Farrakhan himself, who gave an astounding performance, offering the multitudes an unexceptional, even anodyne, call for moral uplift littered with numerology, bogus history and braggadocio masked as humility. The minister was on his best behavior (no mention of the Jews as "bloodsuckers"); but his oration was bad enough, much of it a racialist mish-mash, delivered in world-class demagogic style. After Farrakhan, the forebodings of historical rupture seemed, sadly enough, fully warranted.

Taking the larger historical view, however, the day's proceedings looked less like a break with the past and more like a recurrence of old patterns. Far from innovative, the march's themes of atonement, traditionalism, male moral rearmament and racialism had the classic markings of what historians recognize as America's long tradition of authoritarian revitalization movements. The leaders of these movements have appeared in various guises (including early-nineteenth-century Indian religious prophets, antebellum nativists, Ku Klux Klansmen in the 1920s and latter-day white Christian reactionaries, as well as black nationalists), but they all share some common traits.

Typically, they arise at times of intense economic and cultural stress, when the normal political channels to voice discontent are either blocked or nonexistent. Suspicious of the American ethos of assimilation and reform, the revitalizers turn inward and find their people sunk in a morass of poverty, addiction, vice and hopelessness. Pessimistic about conventional political solutions for these ills, the revitalizers try to construct a more wholesome, alternative, survivalist culture, based on the retrieval of supposedly bygone values and beliefs and on the elimination of all contaminating alien influences. Equipped with an array of racial and religious myths, the revitalizers do not aim to merge their followers with other Americans but rather to build a separate, pure and upstanding nation of their own, on their own. Collectively, they have pursued, in peculiarly American ways, what historians of modern Europe have called the politics of cultural despair.

Until now, the greatest revitalization movement in African American history was Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement and Conservation Association, better known as the UNIA, which enjoyed a brief heyday in the early 1920s. Born and raised in Jamaica, Garvey brought his newly founded organization to the United States in 1916, where it soon won a mass following among blacks who were embittered by the lack of Negro advancement and the outbreak of white racist violence in the wake of World War I. Combining elements of Booker T. Washington's self-help philosophy with celebrations of racial pride, Garvey told American blacks that the time had come for them to cease admiring the heroes of other races, to canonize their own saints and to honor their own martyrs. "We have outgrown slavery, but our minds are still enslaved to the thinking of the Master Race," Garvey declared. "Now take these kinks out of your mind instead of out of your hair."

Garvey and his lieutenants created their own black Christianity; they organized their own fraternal lodges, death-benefit societies and community cultural centers; they started up a number of private enterprises, including a Negro Factories Corporation; and at the movement's height, the Garveyites' newspaper, *Negro World*, claimed a weekly circulation approaching 200,000, mainly in the rapidly growing Northern urban ghettos. The historian Lawrence Levine has described the purposes and the pageantry of the UNIA's First International Convention in 1920:

> Spectators lined the streets of Harlem for miles to watch Garvey in military uniform and plumed hat lead his impressively arrayed followers marching under such banners as: "WE WANT A BLACK CIVILIZATION," "GOD AND THE NEGRO SHALL TRIUMPH," "UNCLE TOM'S DEAD AND BURIED," "AFRICA MUST BE FREE" and, at the head of the Woman's Auxiliary, "GOD GIVE US REAL MEN!" The onlookers, according to Mrs. Garvey, "could not help but catch the spirit of the occasion; they clapped, waved flags and cheered themselves hoarse."

"In all of this," Levine concludes, "Garvey articulated—more brilliantly than any other Afro-American spokesman of the time—the doctrine of revitalization."

Many of Garveyism's specific tenets foreshadowed Farrakhan's black Muslimism. Garvey on racial purity: the UNIA "believes in the social and political separation of all peoples to the extent that they promote their own ideals and civilization." Garvey's outspoken supporter, the Episcopal Reverend Alexander McGuire, on black manhood: "[T]he Uncle Tom nigger has got to go and his place must be taken ... by a black man with a black heart." Garvey on whites: potentially, "every whiteman is a Klansman ... and there is no use lying about it." Garvey on the cunning, cosmopolitan Jews: "[T]heir particular method of living is inconsistent with the broader human principles that make all people homogeneous." Garvey on sexual politics: "[T]ake down the pictures of white women from your walls. Elevate your own women to that place of honour." And, if some of these formulations sounded outlandish, Garvey, like Farrakhan today, won wider respect and sympathy from blacks by spinning out lines about Christian redemption (despite its Islamic trappings, Farrakhan's theology is largely Christian-based) and about the need for manly self-sacrifice and moral rectitude: "Sloth, neglect, indifference caused us to be slaves;" Garvey thundered, "Confidence, conviction, action will cause us to be free men to-day."

With its mystical separatism and its notions of black economic self-deliverance, Garveyism had little of value to offer its followers beyond cathartic theatrics. Like virtually all revitalizing efforts, the movement fell as quickly as it had arisen, a victim of financial improprieties by the leadership and internecine bickering. In the mid-1920s, the integrationist, reformist currents in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

black politics once again gained the initiative, which they managed to retain for decades, even after the black nationalist revival of the late 1960s. Only now, after twenty years of aimlessness and defeat, do those currents find themselves cut off from much of their supposed constituency, giving Farrakhan his golden opportunity.

Bringing hundreds of thousands of black men to Washington does not, on its own, mean that Farrakhan's neo-Garveyism will sustain a mass movement. The throngs on the Mall displayed little immediate interest in joining the Nation of Islam; it remains unclear how much of Farrakhan's message they actually bought. Still, history offers little comfort to those saddened by Farrakhan's sudden success. In the 1920s, American liberalism was at low ebb, but there were at least some signs of revival, like Robert La Follette's Progressive Movement; and, even so, it would take decades for the liberal departures that began with the New Deal to embrace fully the black struggle for civil rights and economic improvement. Today, liberalism is once again at low ebb, but there are hardly any hopeful fresh departures in sight and only the vaguest sense that the nation's enormous political blockages might be soon overcome. Without some dramatic redirection, what has become orthodox rights-based Democratic liberalism offers little to combat the economic despair and spiritual alienation that has gripped much of black America and that feeds Farrakhan's appeal.

Equally important, whereas Garveyism attracted withering polemical attacks from black liberals and social democrats, the neo-Garveyism of the Million Man March attracted widespread support from more mainstream black politicians, intellectuals, clergymen and others, all of whom vainly attempted to separate the event from the fanatics who originally planned it. Seventy years ago, W.E.B. Du Bois called Garvey "the most dangerous enemy of the Negro race in America and the world ... either a lunatic or a traitor." A. Philip Randolph's *Messenger* described Garvey as "the supreme Jamaican jackass," "an unquestioned fool and ignoramus." By contrast, many of today's would-be Du Boises and Randolphs have either deluded themselves about Farrakhan, concluded that *they* can manipulate *him*, or (at least temporarily) lost their nerve. Some of them marched; others came up with excuses for not marching; still others stayed silent. If the march's newfangled Garveyism was a piece of old historical news, the complicity of so many veteran black democrats and integrationists marked a genuine rupture with the past.

There were, of course, some notable dissenters: female leaders like Mary Frances Berry, along with the black feminists and gays, some of whom excoriated Farrakhan for his views on race as well as on gender; intellectuals like Stanley Crouch (who, sounding like a reborn Randolph, denounced the march as an effort led by "a racist, anti-Semitic nut leader of a nut cult"); stalwart African American heroes like Representative John Lewis; as well as the beleaguered national leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other aging (and recently troubled) organizations. The best thing to come out of this affair for black America (and for white America, which has produced its own ample supply of nuts and complicit "mainstream" figures) might be if black leaders, invigorated by Farrakhan's challenge, can somehow help re-establish the primacy of democratic politics over authoritarian revitalization—and help to restore élan to what still remain the most radical of American egalitarian ideals: integration and interracial democracy. For the moment, though, the drift of American politics, on both sides of the racial divide, leads in the opposite direction, more so after the Million Man March than at any time since the 1920s. •

Wrestling with October 16.

ONE MAN'S MARCH

By Glenn C. Loury

Try to understand my problem. I am a black intellectual of moderate to conservative political instincts. Unlike many of my racial brethren, I have been denouncing the anti-Semitism of Minister Louis Farrakhan for over a decade. (My virgin Farrakhan denunciation was in this very magazine in December 1984.) To judge from the volume of press inquiries in past few weeks, I must have been one of the few black men in America willing to state for the record my reservations about, and objections to, the Million Man March. I promiscuously expounded my view that it would not be possible to separate the message from the messenger and that, in any case, a race- and sex-exclusive march would send the wrong message. In short, my cre-

GLENN C. LOURY is professor of economics at Boston University and the author most recently of *One by One From the Inside Out: Race and Responsibility in America* (Free Press).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

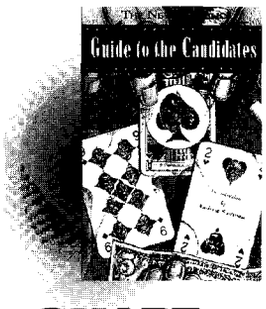
Gift Offer

GET SMART

GIVE *The New Republic* for the HOLIDAYS

50% Off

Now is the perfect time to let your smart friends and relatives in on a good thing, with **holiday gift subscriptions** to *The New Republic.* It's the perfect way to compliment their intelligence, and a smart way for you to avoid the holiday shopping madness.



You'll save money, thanks to our low gift rates, and you can save even more by adding or renewing a subscription for yourself. Best of all, if you order two or more subscriptions, we'll give you a free copy of *The New Republic's Guide to the Candidates, 1996.*

It couldn't be easier. We'll send a card to announce each gift, and the annual subscription (48 issues) will begin in January. PLAY IT SMART AND ORDER TODAY!

SMART Give a subscription to *The New Republic* for just $69.97 for 48 weekly issues.

SMARTER Give a second subscription for just $44.99 and get a free gift for yourself: ***The New Republic's Guide to the Candidates, 1996.***

Free Book

SMARTEST Renew or begin your own subscription at the same low gift rate. Your own subscription, in addition to one gift, also qualifies you for ***The Guide to the Candidates, 1996.***

(Foreign gifts must be prepaid: please add $15 per gift for Canadian and $30 per gift for other Foreign gifts to cover postage.)

CALL TOLL-FREE NOW 1-800-827-1289

RETURN COUPON TO:
The New Republic
P.O. Box 602
Mt. Morris, IL 61054-8053

GIVE THE NEW REPUBLIC for $69.97 for 48 issues and save 50% off the regular newsstand price of $141.60.

RECIPIENT'S NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

Renew or begin your own subscription at the same low gift rate:
❑ I'm (❑ renewing ❑ beginning) my own subscription.
❑ Payment enclosed ❑ Bill me later
Charge my ❑ Amex ❑ Visa ❑ MC

ACCOUNT # EXP. DATE

SIGNATURE

Mail or Call 1-800-827-1289

Give a second subscription for just $44.99 and get a free gift for yourself, *The New Republic's Guide to the Candidates, 1996.*

RECIPIENT'S NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

YOUR NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE ZIP

NGANV5

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dentials as a "deracinated Negro," able to steadfastly resist the call of tribe, are impeccable.

Imagine my surprise, then, when on the day before the march, as I walked along the Mall from the White House toward the Capitol encountering other black men in town for the event, I found myself becoming misty. I watched these "brothers," in clusters of two or three or six, from Philadelphia and Norfolk and my own hometown of Chicago, wandering among the museums and monuments like the tourists they were, cameras in hand, and the sight brought tears to my eyes. The march had not even begun, and already powerful sentiments, long buried inside me, were being resurrected. I knew then that I was in trouble.

Here were young black guys, the same ones occasionally mistaken by belligerent police officers or frightened passersby for threats to public safety because of the color of their skin and the swagger of their gait, scrambling up the steps and lounging between the columns of the National Gallery building, some even checking out the "Whistler and His Contemporaries" show on display inside. And there were others, sharing an excited expectancy with Japanese tourists and rural whites as we all waited in line to tour the White House. Taking in these various scenes, an obvious but profound thought occurred to me: this is their country, too. So, embarrassed that I needed to remind myself of this fact, I wept.

The next day, as I beheld hundreds of thousands of black men gathering in a crowd that ultimately stretched from the steps of the Capitol back toward the Washington Monument, I would be even more deeply moved. Everything that has been said about the discipline and dignity of the gathering, and the spirit of camaraderie that pervaded it, is true. It was a glorious, uplifting day, and I was swept up in it along with everyone else. It almost did not matter what was being said from the podium. For the first time in years, as the drums beat and the crowd swayed, I heard the call of the tribe, big time.

Mingling in that throng, my thoughts drifted back to my late Uncle Moonie, the husband of my mother's sister, who, as head of the extended household in which I was raised, exerted a powerful influence on me in my formative years. Uncle Moonie, so called because his large, round eyes protruded like half-moons beneath his often-furrowed brow, was a barber, part-time hustler and admirer (though not a follower) of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, founder of the Nation of Islam. My uncle kicked a nasty heroin habit in his youth and went on to achieve what was for his generation of black men an impressive degree of financial security. Fiercely proud and independent, he constantly railed against "the white man," and he never tired of berating those blacks who looked to "white folk" for their salvation. Occasionally he would take me with him to the state prison for his monthly visits with one or another of his incarcerated friends. "There, but for the grace of God, go you or I," he would say. He encouraged me in an intelligent militancy and even sought to extend his influence from beyond the grave by bequeathing to me one of his most cherished possessions—a complete set of the recorded speeches of Malcolm X. Had Uncle Moonie lived to attend this march, he would have thought it the greatest experience of his life.

To be sure, my uncle would not have understood my public criticism of the march or of Minister Louis Farrakhan, for that matter. He was no great fan of the nonviolent philosophy of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. He much preferred the straight-backed, unapologetic defiance of Malcolm. He would have been puzzled that I could find the opinions of "white folks" worth taking into account. He would have rejected the notion that there are ethical and political principles, my fealty to which could transcend my sense of racial loyalty.

In short, were he alive today, I fear that Uncle Moonie would be profoundly disappointed in me. Still, those tears welling in my eyes at the sight of "our brothers" on the Mall might have given him hope that I could yet be redeemed. The tingle that ran up my spine as I beheld that massive assembly of beautiful black men seeking unity and spiritual upliftment caused me to hope, for a fleeting moment, that I could, at long last, go home again.

My pre-march analysis was a tight little piece of amateur political theory that ran as follows: the problem with the Million Man March is that it mixes communal and political activities inappropriately. As a communal matter, a religiously motivated gathering of men seeking to commit themselves to reconstruction and renewal in their personal lives and in their respective neighborhoods, it is highly commendable. However, as a political matter, gathering on the Mall at the site of the great 1963 March on Washington—but now as black men and not as Americans, under the leadership of a Louis Farrakhan not a Martin Luther King—this is deeply problematic. The sacrifice of liberal democratic ideals and the separatist message is too high a price to pay for getting our cultural trains to run on time.

Yet, when put to the test on the Mall, this elegant bit of theory seemed to collapse instantly under the weight of a single fact: nearly one-half million African American men had solemnly, prayerfully assembled to affirm their intention to take responsibility for the condition of their people.

As a social critic, I have called for many years for the civil rights leadership to reorient itself from a focus on the "enemy without," white racism, toward the "enemy within," the dysfunctional behaviors of young black men and women that prevent too many from capitalizing on existing opportunity. Well, here were some 5 percent of the age-adjusted national black male population, together in one place, supporting this very idea. Standing there, and listening to their collective affirmations, I found it hard to deny that the conception and execution of this event had been a work of genius. In the heat of those moments, I felt confused about my ideals and commitments and deeply ashamed to have spoken against the march.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

However, I have been an economist for more years than I have been a social critic. As such, I have learned well the art of tenaciously holding on to a theory that, by virtue of its elegance and appeal to intuition, "ought to be true," even when it seems inconsistent with the facts. The key is to find another way of looking at the evidence that casts one's favored theory in a better light. That is not difficult in the case at hand, for what seemed at that march like the salvation of black Americans is, upon closer examination, no such thing at all.

Begin with a simple question: How did it come to pass that this great moment in American cultural politics was orchestrated by the demagogic leader of a black fascist sect, while no other nationally prominent black leader could have pulled it off? The answer is two-fold. First, Farrakhan, whatever one thinks of him, is a *religious* leader, speaking to a flock desperate to hear an explicitly spiritual appeal. The Nation of Islam has a track record of "turning the souls" of a great many underclass men, especially in prisons. In contrast, liberal black political leaders, ironically drawn substantially from the clergy, have checked their theologically conservative Christian witness at the door of the Democratic Party. In coalitions with feminists, gays and radical secularists, and in reaction against the politics of the religious right, they have muted their voices on social issues, leaving a void in black public life that Minister Farrakhan has adroitly filled.

LOUIS FARRAKHAN BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Secondly, Farrakhan's message of spiritual uplift is deeply rooted in a white-man-has-done-us-wrong grievance politics. He does not ask blacks to give up the latter as he proffers the former. In this, he is being faithful to his teacher, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, who taught that the white man is a blue-eyed devil, a mutant breed created by the mad scientist Yakub and allowed by God to rule over the superior black man until such time as the black man would return to the true faith. No serious persons, inside the Nation of Islam or out, could take this literally. But the premise that blacks find our reason for being in the fact of our enslavement and subsequent persecution anchors all that the Nation of Islam undertakes. This narrow, reactive self-conception is glorified as manly, truth-telling, clear-eyed realism.

Thus, forcing myself to listen carefully to what the speakers at this massive gathering actually said, I began to fear that, notwithstanding the emotion of the moment, nothing will really change. We all pray that one-half million inspired black men will return to their cities and towns, redouble their efforts and with the help of their women create nurturing families and community-based institutions that will change the awful facts on the ground. But do we have any warrant, based upon what was said from the podium, much of it clichéd, resentful and conspiracy-laden, to believe this will transpire?

Uncle Moonie has been dead nearly fifteen years now. His was a different, harder time for black men. That he admired Elijah Muhammad is not surprising, given the context of his life. Now, removed from the passions of the march, and having had the opportunity to reflect, I believe that my passionate rejection of racial essentialism was right for me and, given the context of our lives today, for "my people." The American people, that is.

There are now one and a half million Americans behind bars. This seems to me a tragedy of enormous proportions. Our cities are filled with poor, uneducated young people, wandering the streets aimlessly and without hope. This is a blight that graphically reveals the failure of our political leadership. We now celebrate in our politics the state-sanctioned, eye-for-an-eye taking of human life via capital punishment and the arbitrary locking away for a lifetime of those who have made but three mistakes. I think that this is an abomination unworthy of a civilized nation. So do the organizers of the march. But, unlike them, I do not believe that our outrage should depend on the racial identity of those who

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suffer. What is morally significant is that they are human; their claim on our attention derives from this fact alone.

The call of the tribe is seductive, but ultimately it is a siren call. As comforting as the prospect may seem, the truth, for all of us, is that we can't go home again. For blacks, as Ralph Ellison has taught us, "our task is that of making ourselves individuals.... We create the race by creating ourselves and then to our great astonishment we will have created a culture. Why waste time creating a conscience for something which doesn't exist? For you see, blood and skin do not think."

This is the fundamental point. Skin and blood do not think, or dream, or love or pray. The "conscience of the race" must be constructed from the inside out, one person at a time. I did not hear this sentiment expressed by a single speaker at the Million Man March. •

Queen for a day?

Against my wishes, the Million Man March proceeded as planned. The organizers did not notice that Minister Louis Farrakhan's anti-Semitic, anti-intellectual, sexist and homosexual-baiting racism had left me "unable to support" the march. Not "opposed to" it, but unable, in good conscience, to let its supporters have any peace. A million brothers united for peace and atonement is every sister's dream. But under a banner borne by Benjamin Chavis and Farrakhan? Surely we demean ourselves and insult our fellow Americans with such company. And why must those they claim to be honoring remain behind; why not apologize to our faces?

As the march neared, I feared the worst: whites, whipped into a post-O.J. frenzy, blowing something else up; swaggering black youths expressing their newfound pride as racial and sexual aggression; our women working that much harder while our men attend male-only meetings. In this pre-election year, I dreaded the political fallout most of all. I foresaw a direct relationship between the number of marchers and the number of new prisons planned. And then, just before the march, I went shopping.

My sister, her husband and my nephew had driven in from St. Louis so I needed something in the fridge besides beer and portabello mushrooms. Laden with packages, I struggled from the supermarket behind three young black men who looked back briefly when one of my bags toppled. One of them stopped, grabbed the other's arm and gestured toward me. "We should ... do something?" he whispered with almost comic intensity. He looked 18 and scared to death of me.

The others stopped, blocking my path and looking stupidly around. Brainstorm. "The door! I'll hold the door!"

The pattern kept repeating itself. Black men stepping aside with exaggerated courtesy to let me pass, black men giving me their Metro seats, black men calling me "sister" instead of "baby." Not all, not even most, but a very noticeable few.

I followed the march's progress in the media and my own excitement grew; clearly, we were groping not for Minister Farrakhan but for unity and self-respect. And maybe we should keep Farrakhan's venom in perspective. After all, aren't blacks constantly required to look past the Founding Fathers' slave-mongering? By the time my family arrived, I was still "unable to support" the march, but much less vigorously. We stayed up all night while they told me of the caravans heading for D.C. and the camaraderie they shared with these strangers on the road. People had helped each other with repairs and places to sleep; they'd shared food, childcare, directions, life stories. My criticisms seemed non sequiturs to them.

"We didn't come to join The Nation," my brother-in-law told me in a tone that suggested I might actually be misinformed.

At the march, my sister and I roamed that ocean of black manhood for eight transfixed hours. It was the happiest, most peaceful solemnity I will ever witness. We saw no alcohol, no empty liquor containers (although I did smell marijuana once). There was almost none of that male horseplay and loud talk that characterizes typical social situations—the brothers were serious and subdued.

There were so few women, we turned heads all day. We grew hoarse returning the respectful greetings, we starred on camcorders and posed for innumerable photos. Few seemed to resent our presence, rather, their eyes widened, their feet stumbled and their hands grew awkward. They were embarrassed. All our dirty little secrets were being aired today, and there didn't seem to be a man on the Mall who could look at us without seeing the women they'd left at home to do the scut work. Paths opened before us; chairs appeared from nowhere; men yanked their sons aside saying, "Boy, let your auntie by." For an entire, righteous day I was "auntie," I was "sister," I was "daughter." Not "bitch," not "ho," not "sweet thang."

Strangely, Monday kept reminding me of a very different gathering—the Gay Pride celebrations I attended last summer. Since Gay Pride and the Million Man March have little in common, it was a while before I understood why one reminded me of the other. Then it clicked. At both, I was completely relaxed. Both lacked one element intimately associated with the life of every urban American woman: fear. Fear ranging from the snatched bag to the grabbed ass, past pubic hairs on Coke cans and dead ahead to full-scale gang rape. Fear is a low-grade fever American women live with every day, banked but ever present. But, on both these occasions, women were given a one-day, fear-free grace period.

Like last summer, within minutes, unconsciously, I let my guard down. If a man brushed against me, I knew it was only to steady me as he passed. Both times, my purse swung loose and unzipped as it bulged with souvenirs. I had no fear of drunken brawls, no dread of macho confrontations, no insults to be borne silently. Today, I could initiate conversations, meet my brothers' eyes and smile as they neared. Or, what was even better, chastise that lone disrespectful man, confident that he would slink away ashamed.

America is right to hold us responsible for the company we keep, and our answer must be the same it gave us about Afrikaner apartheid—concerted, sincere constructive engagement. Farrakhan is not the best we can do, he's just, unfortunately, the best we can do right now. Deserving leaders will emerge, and we'll stabilize our moral core again. One rally won't cure black America of its ills, but, when all was said and done, I found myself standing proud, unafraid and disobedient among 1 million of my brothers—and finally able to support the march.

DEBRA DICKERSON

DEBRA DICKERSON is a lawyer in Washington, D.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Down the Tubes?

Time is running out on public education. Americans have always been committed to the public schools. They consider them a basic democratic institution where students from the many diverse groups in the U.S. can learn to work together. But according to Public Agenda's new study, "Assignment Incomplete," the support for public education is wearing thin. A majority of Americans believe that the public schools cannot be counted on to provide the things they consider most important in an education—discipline, the basics, and standards. Assuming the report is correct—and it is very convincing—the schools have a window of opportunity to regain public support. If that is ignored, we will see the collapse of the system.

The schools have a window of opportunity to regain public support.

Most Americans favor the idea of public education. And generally, when you ask them if they are satisfied with the schools their children attend, they answer, *yes*. But, as Public Agenda researchers found, this is a kind of veneer. The minute the researchers started probing on issues that the public cares about, the support for public schools evaporated. A big majority said that private schools do a better job. For example, 61 percent said that private schools are more likely to provide order and discipline in the classroom; only 18 percent thought local public schools did a better job at this. Fifty-three percent said that private schools have higher academic standards; only 24 percent said standards were higher in local public schools. And when Public Agenda researchers asked the ultimate question—"Where would you send your kid, if money was not an issue?"—57 percent of parents said, "to a private school."

This is devastating. Yet though Americans are angry and frustrated about public education, Public Agenda found that they do not want to scrap it. They are willing to give public education another chance. And what they want is straightforward enough: primarily, safe and orderly schools where all students can at least be sure of learning the basics.

I've written in earlier columns about Public Agenda's exploration of the discipline issue in "First Things First." This report, which was issued last year, found strong public support for expelling students who bring drugs or weapons to school. A large majority also said that "taking persistent troublemakers out of class would be a very effective means of boosting academic performance in the schools." "Assignment Incomplete" shows that the public continues to insist that order is a prerequisite to learning.

The report also shows that the public is horrified by the frequent failure of schools to teach students what it considers to be the basics—reading, writing, and spelling the English language and simple math (to which most people would now add basic computer skills). Professional educators often put down an emphasis on basics as being narrow and limited. The public agrees that schools should not stop with the basics—they are the basis for further learning—but over 90 percent consider teaching them to be of utmost importance. And nearly half think that a high school diploma does not guarantee a command of the basics. In focus groups carried out in connection with the survey, people spoke over and over again about high school graduates who could not write a letter without gross misspellings, read a newspaper article or make change at a check-out counter.

Would the public support the tougher standards they seem to be calling for? To find out, Public Agenda researchers asked questions that made people look closely at some of the implications of tougher standards. They found that people do not think that tougher standards will come without a cost: Nearly half of the public believe that more students will drop out if standards are tightened up. At the same time, 71 percent believe that youngsters will work harder and 72 percent think they will learn more. Were members of the public advocating an academic Reign of Terror? Not at all. Indeed there were some worries about tougher standards' leading to undue pressure on students. However, 70 percent said they would support a principal who "stresses academic achievement and expects teachers to give homework and tests often."

Whether or not the public will remain committed to public education or abandon it in favor of private education is up for grabs. The dissatisfaction that people feel is very basic. Superintendents, school board members, teachers, and other people who care about public education have to realize this. And they have to understand that they will not be able to change the public perception of the schools merely by talking about the problems or denying their existence. The schools will have to change. Otherwise public education will continue on its present course to destruction.

To order "Assignment Incomplete," send $10 to Public Agenda, 6 E. 39th Street, New York , New York 10016. Telephone 212-686-6610.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.

ADVERTISEMENT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why whites and blacks seem so divided.

THE PARADOX OF INTEGRATION

By Orlando Patterson

The traumas of the Million Man March and the O.J. Simpson verdict have forced America to focus its gaze once again on its lingering racial crisis. In sharpening our focus, they have done at least one good. By casting too bright a light on the realities of our unfinished racial agenda, they have scrambled the sordid use of coded and covert racial rhetoric by conventional politicians. We must now call a spade a spade, and, while it is good old American politics to fan racial division while pretending the opposite, it is far too risky to appear clearly to be doing so. But what exactly is the crisis upon which we again gaze?

For African Americans, these are genuinely the best and worst of times, at least since the ending of formal Jim Crow laws. What is odd, however, is that, in the current rhetoric of race, the pain completely dominates the gain. "Pain and predicament is driving this march," cried Jesse Jackson in a by now familiar African American refrain. The orthodox view among blacks at nearly all points on the political spectrum is that relations between the races are disastrous, whether it is the left, focusing on the political neglect of the devastated ghettos, or the right, condemning the abuses of affirmative action and failed government policies. Paradoxically, it is precisely the considerable success of America's experiment in integration that makes it almost impossible for black Americans to recognize what they have achieved. This perceived lack of gratitude in turn fuels white resentment and gives public discourse on race today the bewildering quality of a dialogue of the deaf.

On the one hand, there is no denying the fact that, in absolute terms, African Americans, on average, are better off now than at any other time in their history. The civil rights movement effectively abolished the culture of post-juridical slavery, which, reinforced by racism and legalized segregation, had denied black people the basic rights of citizenship in the land of their birth. They are now very much a part of the nation's political life, occupying positions in numbers and importance that go well beyond mere ethnic representation or tokenism. Quite apart from the thousands of local and appointed offices around the country (including mayorships of some of the nation's largest cities), blacks have occupied positions of major national importance in what is now the dominant power in the world—as governors, senators and powerful members of Congress chairing major congressional committees, and as appointed officials filling some of the most important offices in the nation, including that of the head of the most powerful military machine on earth.

Even as I write, the Colin Powell phenomenon bedazzles. For the first time, a black man is being seriously considered for the nation's highest office, with his strongest support coming from people with conservative views on race. It would be ridiculous to dismiss these developments as mere tokens. What they demonstrate, beyond a doubt, is that being black is no longer a significant obstacle to participation in the public life of the nation.

What is more, blacks have also become full members of what may be called the nation's moral community and cultural life. They are no longer in the basement of moral discourse in American life, as was the case up to about thirty or forty years ago. Until then blacks were "invisible men" in the nation's consciousness, a truly debased ex-slave people. America was assumed to be a white country. The public media, the literary and artistic community, the great national debates about major issues, even those concerning poverty, simply excluded blacks from consideration. Even a liberal thinker like John Kenneth Galbraith could write a major discourse on the affluent society without much thought to their plight.

No longer. The enormity of the achievement of the last forty years in American race relations cannot be overstated. The black presence in American life and thought is today pervasive. A mere 13 percent of the population, they dominate the nation's popular culture: its music, its dance, its talk, its sports, its youths' fashion; and they are a powerful force in its popular and elite literatures. A black music, jazz, is the nation's classical voice, defining, audibly, its entire civilizational style. So powerful and unavoidable is the black popular influence that it is now not uncommon to find persons who, while remaining racists in personal relations and attitudes, nonetheless have surrendered their tastes, and their viewing and listening habits, to black entertainers, talk-show hosts and sit-com stars. The typical Oprah Winfrey viewer is a conservative, white lower-middle-class housewife; the typical rap fan,

ORLANDO PATTERSON is John Cowles professor of sociology at Harvard University and the author of a forthcoming book on black Americans.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an upper-middle-class white suburban youth. The cultural influence of so small and disadvantaged a minority on the wider society that has so harshly abused it finds few parallels in the history of civilization.

Closely related to the achievement of full political and cultural citizenship has been another great success of the post-war years: the desegregation of the military between 1948 and 1965. The extraordinary progress made in eliminating all formal discrimination, and a good deal of informal prejudice in promotions, has made the military, especially the Army, a model of successful race relations for the civilian community. With more than 30 percent of Army recruits and 10 percent of its officer corps black, the Army, and to a lesser extent the other services, stands out in American society as the only arena in which blacks routinely exercise authority over whites.

Most of these developments were helped along by another revolution in black life: the rapid growth in school enrollment and achievement at all levels. In 1940 there was a four-year gap in median years of schooling between whites and blacks; by 1991 this gap had been reduced to a few months. During the same period, the proportion of blacks aged 25 to 34 completing high school almost caught up with that of whites: 84 percent compared to 87 percent.

The record is far more mixed, and indeed troubling, in the case of higher education. After rapid growth in college completion during the '70s, the numbers fell off considerably during the '80s, especially for black men. The long-term effect has been that, while the proportion of blacks completing college has grown from less than 2 percent in 1940 to almost 12.8 percent in 1994, this is still only about half the white completion rate of almost 25 percent.

Even so, a six-fold increase in college completion is nothing to sniff at. It is great absolute progress and, compared to white populations elsewhere, great relative progress. African Americans, from a condition of mass illiteracy fifty years ago, are now among the most educated persons in the world, with median years of schooling and college completion rates higher than those of most Western Europeans. The average reader might find this statement a shocking overstatement. It is not. It only sounds like an overstatement when considered in light of the relentless insistence of the advocacy community that the miseducation of black Americans is the major source of their present dilemmas.

The rise of a genuine black middle class over the past quarter of a century is another cause for celebration, although no group of persons is less likely to celebrate it than the black establishment itself. The term "black middle class" once referred dismissively to those black persons who happened to be at the top of the bottom rung: Pullman porters, head waiters, successful barbers and street-front preachers, small-time funeral parlor owners and the like. Today the term "black middle class" means that segment of the nation's middle class which happens to be black, and it is no longer dependent on a segregated economy. These are without doubt the best of times for middle-class African Americans, who own more businesses and control a greater share of the national wealth than at any other period. At the most conservative estimate, they are between a quarter and a third of the black population, which means anywhere between 8 and 10 million persons. It is a mistake to overemphasize their shaky economic base, as is routinely done. Almost all new middle classes in the history of capitalism have had precarious economic starts. Seen from a long-term perspective, the important thing to note is that the children they produce will be second- and third-generation burghers with all the confidence, educational resources and, most of all, cultural capital to find a more secure place in the nation's economy.

And yet it is also no exaggeration to say that, both subjectively and by certain objective standards, these are among the worst of times, since the ending of Jim Crow, for the African American population.

Put in the starkest terms, the bottom third of the African American population—some 10 million persons—live in dire poverty, while the bottom 10 percent or so—the so-called underclass—exist in an advanced stage of social, economic and moral disintegration. The grim statistics are now familiar to anyone who pays even the most cursory attention to the news.

Thirty-one percent of all black families (in contrast with only 8 percent of non-Hispanic whites), comprising nearly a third of all African Americans, live in poverty. This is worse than in 1969. Children disproportionately bear the brunt of impoverishment. In 1994, 46 percent of all black children lived in poverty, nearly three times that of white children, and the situation is likely to get worse. Their parents and other adult caretakers experience Depression-level unemployment. The overall unemployment rate for blacks is 14 percent, more than twice that of whites (6 percent). But this obscures the fact that unemployment is concentrated in certain areas and among the young, where it tops 40 percent.

These figures tell only part of the plight of poor children. The other, grimmer aspect of the dilemma is the growing number of children born to female children with little or no social or economic support from the biological fathers or any other man, for that matter. The resulting abusive, mal-socialization of children by mothers who were themselves abused and mal-socialized is at the heart of the social and moral chaos in what is called the underclass. The situation is one of complete social anarchy and moral nihilism, reflected in the casual devaluation of human life. Kids and young adults kill for sneakers, leather jackets, cheap jewelry and drugs; worse, they kill for no other reason than having been dissed by a wrong look or misstatement. Linked to this social and moral catastrophe are the other well-known pathologies: the high drop-out rate in inner-city high schools, the epidemic of drugs and crime resulting in a horrendous incarceration rate wherein one in three of all black men aged 25 to 29 are under the supervision of the criminal justice system. Although government action is needed, solving these problems will take considerably more than

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

changes in government policy. Clearly, the message of the Million Man March was long overdue.

There is undoubtedly much to outrage our sense of justice, but the condition of the bottom third should not obscure the extraordinary achievements of the upper two-thirds of the black population or the progress made in race relations over the past forty years. Black leaders' near-complete disregard of these hard-won achievements is obtuse and counterproductive.

This strange tendency to more loudly lament the black predicament the better it gets can be understood as a paradox of desegregation. When blacks and whites were segregated from each other there was little opportunity for conflict. The two groups lived in largely separate worlds, and when they did come in contact their interactions were highly structured by the perverse etiquette of racial relations. The system may have worked well in minimizing conflict, as long as both groups played by the rules, but it was clearly a pernicious arrangement for blacks since it condemned them to inferior status and excluded them from participation in the political life of their society and from nearly all the more desirable opportunities for economic advancement.

Desegregation meant partial access to the far superior facilities and opportunities open previously only to whites. Hence, it entailed a great improvement in the condition and dignity of blacks. All this should be terribly obvious, but it must be spelled out because it is precisely this obvious improvement that is so often implicitly denied when we acknowledge one of the inevitable consequences of desegregation: namely that, as individuals in both groups meet more and more, the possibility for conflict is bound to increase.

Whites outnumber blacks eight to one, and this simple demographic fact has an enormous social significance often unnoticed by whites. Numerous polls have shown tremendous change in white attitudes toward blacks over the last thirty years. For example, the number of whites who hold racist beliefs, measured by unfavorable attitudes toward miscegenation, integrated housing and job equality, has declined from a majority in the '50s to a quarter of the total population today. For whites this is real progress, however one may wish to quibble over the meaning of the survey data. But, even with only a quarter of all whites holding racist beliefs, it remains the case that for every black person there are two white racists.

Furthermore, the vast majority of blacks will rarely come in contact with the 75 percent of whites who are tolerant, for simple socioeconomic reasons. More educated, more prosperous and more suburban, the tolerant three-quarters tend to live exactly where blacks are least likely to be found: in the expensive suburbs. On the other hand, it is the least educated and most prejudiced whites who tend to be in closest proximity to blacks.

Further, the behavior of the tolerant three quarters of whites, and their attempts to improve the condition of blacks, tends to intensify racist feelings among the whites most likely to come in contact with blacks. The cost of racial change is disproportionately borne by those whites who have traditionally been most hostile to blacks. Black improvement is invariably perceived as competition in the once-protected economic preserves of working-class whites. Hence, not only do racist whites continue to outnumber blacks but their racist behavior also finds more frequent and intense outlets.

Of special concern here is the behavior of law-enforcement agencies. The typical big-city police officer is the white person with whom the typical lower- and working-class black person is most likely to come in contact outside the workplace. Unfortunately, white police officers tend to come from precisely the working-class urban communities most likely to be hostile to blacks. And there is also abundant psychological evidence that they tend to conform to the authoritarian personality type which most closely correlates with racist behavior. At the same time, their profession brings them into contact with the most lawless members of the black community, continuously reinforcing their prejudices.

The result is that the typical white police officer holds all blacks in suspicion and treats them in a manner that constantly threatens their dignity and most basic rights. In some urban communities this amounts to life under a virtual police state for many law-abiding working-class and poor black Americans. Middle-class status makes some difference, but only in well-defined social situations. It can sometimes even be a disadvantage. The Mark Fuhrman tapes revealed what every bourgeois black person already knew: that in unprotected contexts—driving on the highway, visiting a white suburban friend or caught in some minor traffic or other infraction—they are likely to find themselves specially targeted by white police officers and detectives who resent their success and take malignant pleasure in harassing them, especially if they are in mixed relationships.

In this context, the speedy decision of the jury in the O.J. Simpson trial makes perfect sense. The type of lower-middle and working-class black people who sat on the jury have every reason to believe that white police officers are racists only too willing to plant evidence and lie in court. All this is in direct contrast to the experience of the typical white person, who views the police officer either as a friend or acquaintance from the neighborhood or as a protector and guardian of the suburban peace.

What exists, then, is a serious mismatch in racial perception of change. Most middle-class whites feel, correctly, that things have gotten much better not only in the objective socioeconomic condition of blacks but in their improved attitude toward blacks. The typical black person perceives and experiences the situation as either having not changed or having gotten worse.

The experience of Massachusetts is typical. By all objective criteria this is one of most racially liberal areas of America. Not only was it the first state to elect a black U.S. senator since Reconstruction, but its current two senators are among the most liberal and pro-black in the Senate. And yet, among blacks of all classes, the Boston area has

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the unenviable reputation of being one of the most racist parts of the country. Many African Americans, put off by its racist image, still refuse to move to the area. The fears of blacks are legitimate; but so is the bewilderment of whites in middle-class Boston or in neighboring cities such as Cambridge (arguably one of the most racially liberal cities in the nation) when black colleagues insist they would rather go back South than settle anywhere near Boston. The sad truth is that, even as the number of tolerant whites rapidly increased between the '60s and '70s, the amount of contact between blacks and racist working-class whites also increased, as did the racial animosity of these whites, expressed most notoriously in the anti-busing violence of South Boston.

To make matters worse, the hostile reaction of a small proportion of whites not only hurts a large proportion of blacks; but, given the adversarial and litigious nature of the culture, and the tendency of the media to highlight the exceptional, a small but active number of whites can disproportionately influence the perception of all whites, with consequences deleterious to blacks. The current political hostility to affirmative action is a perfect case in point.

Only a small proportion of whites—7 percent, according to recent opinion-poll data—claim to have been personally affected in any way by affirmative action. Yet the point of affirmative action is to bring blacks into greater contact with whites at the workplace and other sites where they were traditionally excluded. Aggrieved whites who feel they have been passed over in preference for blacks react sharply to this experience, which in turn colors the views of many whites who are in no way influenced by the policy. The result is the "angry white male" syndrome: increased hostility toward what are perceived as unreasonable black demands, and the conviction that the vast majority of whites are being hurt—78 percent of whites think so—when, in fact, only 7 percent can actually attest to such injuries from their own experience.

The experiential mismatch between blacks and whites is made still worse by what may be called the outrage of liberation. A formerly oppressed group's sense of outrage at what has been done to it increases the more equal it becomes with its former oppressors. In part, this is simply a case of relative deprivation; in part, it is the result of having a greater voice—more literate and vocal leadership, more access to the media and so on. But it also stems from the formerly deprived group's increased sense of dignity and, ironically, its embrace of the formerly oppressive Other within its moral universe.

The slave, the sharecropping serf, the black person living under Jim Crow laws administered by vicious white police officers and prejudiced judges, were all obliged, for reasons of sheer survival, to accommodate somehow to the system. One form of accommodation was to expect and demand less from the racist oppressors. To do so was in no way to lessen one's contempt, even hatred and loathing, for them. Indeed, one's diminished expectations may even have been a reflection of one's contempt.

It has often been observed that one of racism's worst consequences is the denial of the black person's humanity. What often goes unnoticed is the other side of this twisted coin: that it left most blacks persuaded that whites were less than human. Technically clever yes, powerful, well-armed and prolific, to be sure, but without an ounce of basic human decency. No one whose community of memory was etched with the vision of lynched, barbecued ancestors, no black person who has seen the flash of greedy, obsessive hatred in the fish-blue stare of a cracker's cocked eyes, could help but question his inherent humanness. Most blacks, whatever their outward style of interaction with whites, genuinely believed, as did the mother of Henry Louis Gates, that most whites were inherently filthy and evil, or as the poet Sterling Brown once wrote, that there was no place in heaven for "Whuffolks ... being so onery," that, indeed, for most of them "hell would be good enough—if big enough."

Integration, however partially, began to change all that. By dis-alienating the Other, the members of each group came, however reluctantly, to accept each other's humanness. But that acceptance comes at a price: for whites, it is the growing sense of disbelief at what the nightly news brings in relentless detail from the inner cities. For blacks, it is the sense of outrage that someone truly human could have done what the evidence of more than three and a half centuries makes painfully clear. Like a woman chased and held down in a pitch-dark night who discovers, first to her relief, then to her disbelief, that the stranger recoiling from her in the horror of recognition had been her own brother, the moral embrace of integration is a liberation with a double take: outrage verging on incomprehension.

Increasingly exposed to the conflicts that result from integration, whites may rebel against affirmative action and other programs that bring them face to face with black anger. But resegregation is neither plausible nor desirable. Instead, whites, who dominate America's powerful institutions, must address the roots of black rage by committing to black America's socioeconomic advancement.

But, despite this imperative, a painful truth (one seemingly recognized by the participants in last week's march) emerges from the comparative sociology of group relations: except for those now-rare cases in which a minority constitutes the elite, the burden of racial and ethnic change always rests on a minority group. Although both whites and blacks have strong mutual interests in solving their racial problem, though the solution must eventually come from both, blacks must play the major role in achieving this objective—not only because they have more to gain from it but also because whites have far less to lose from doing nothing. It is blacks who must take the initiative, suffer the greater pain, define and offer the more creative solutions, persevere in the face of obstacles and paradoxical outcomes, insist that improvements are possible and maintain a climate of optimism concerning the eventual outcome. Or, to paraphrase Martin Luther King, it is they, and often they alone, who must keep the dream of a racially liberated America alive. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Sins

Malcolm Cowley tells us that on June 8, 1849, Nathaniel Hawthorne went to his home in Salem, Massachusetts, and gave his wife some bad news. After working for three years in the Salem custom house, he had lost his job.

> "Oh, then," his wife cried, "you can write your book." When he asked her where the family's bread and rice would come from, she opened a drawer and showed him the savings she had made from her household allowance.

A line can be drawn, with some zigs and zags but without a break, from Mrs. Hawthorne's frugality to Demi Moore's latest starring vehicle, **The Scarlet Letter** (Hollywood). This is the novel, from which the Moore film is "freely adapted," that Hawthorne began writing on the day he was fired.

At least eight previous times *The Scarlet Letter* has been filmed, the first time in 1908. I've seen only two: the 1927 version directed by Victor Seastrom, and the 1972 version *Der Scharlachrote Buchstabe*, directed by Wim Wenders. Of the first I remember only Lillian Gish's anguished courage; of the second, only that Senta Berger was the best-fed Puritan in history.

I hope to remember even less of this latest version, but alas, Moore's two-and-a-half-note vocal range, her even narrower emotional range, her general air of "Look at me wearing costumes, for gosh sake," will probably linger. This Hester will fester. Gary Oldman strives earnestly to give some truth to Arthur Dimmesdale, but the odds against him, in cast and adaptation, are too great. Robert Duvall plays Hester's long-lost husband, and the only interest in his performance is wondering whether he looks funnier with a shaved head or in a Caroline wig.

About Douglas Day Stewart's screen adaptation, I'll note only that for him the story ends happily, with Hester and Arthur and little Pearl off to a new life in the South. Roland Joffé, whose last directing job was the ridiculous *City of Joy* with Patrick Swayze, is apparently now hardened in mediocre skill and fundamental stupidity. Hester's scarlet letter was A. This film's scarlet letter is F.

Is this the Year of the Eye? *Clockers* has an immense close-up of a human eye, and **Strange Days** (20th Century Fox) begins with a similar close-up.

That, if you can believe it, is the least eccentric shot in the film. Kathryn Bigelow, the director, obviously made up her mind not to give us one second's respite from her visual cleverness: oddities of angle and framing inundate us throughout. Worse: Bigelow is patently out to prove that a female director can be just as tough as any male. A previous picture of hers, *Blue Steel*, packed a lot of pistols. In *Strange Days* — which is really an understated title — pistols are almost the least of it. The picture opens with a burst of armed robbery, seen through the eyes of one of the crooks via hand-held camera, and multiple kinds of violence flood past constantly thereafter.

The screenplay by James Cameron and Jay Cocks is a potpourri of science fiction, pop psychology and comic-book action. The setting is Los Angeles. The time is the very end of 1999, a not-so-distant future in which the American public gets closer and closer to the condition of laboratory rats. Ralph Fiennes plays an ex-cop who has equipment (we're not told how he got it) that can record, through an electronic skull-cap, what a person wearing one of those caps is seeing, doing, hearing. He pays oddballs, especially criminals, to wear these skull-caps; then he sells the recorded results to thrill-seekers, who can play them like video tapes.

Juliette Lewis, the world's least voluptuous sex bomb, is a club singer, the ex-cop's former girlfriend now hooked up with a real baddie. Angela Bassett is a limo driver — and a kung fu virtuoso — who knew Fiennes when he was a cop and comes to his aid when he's in trouble because he was once nice to her child. The McGuffin, as Hitchcock dubbed the missing document or map or jewel or whatever, is one particular Fiennes tape that recorded some murder evidence.

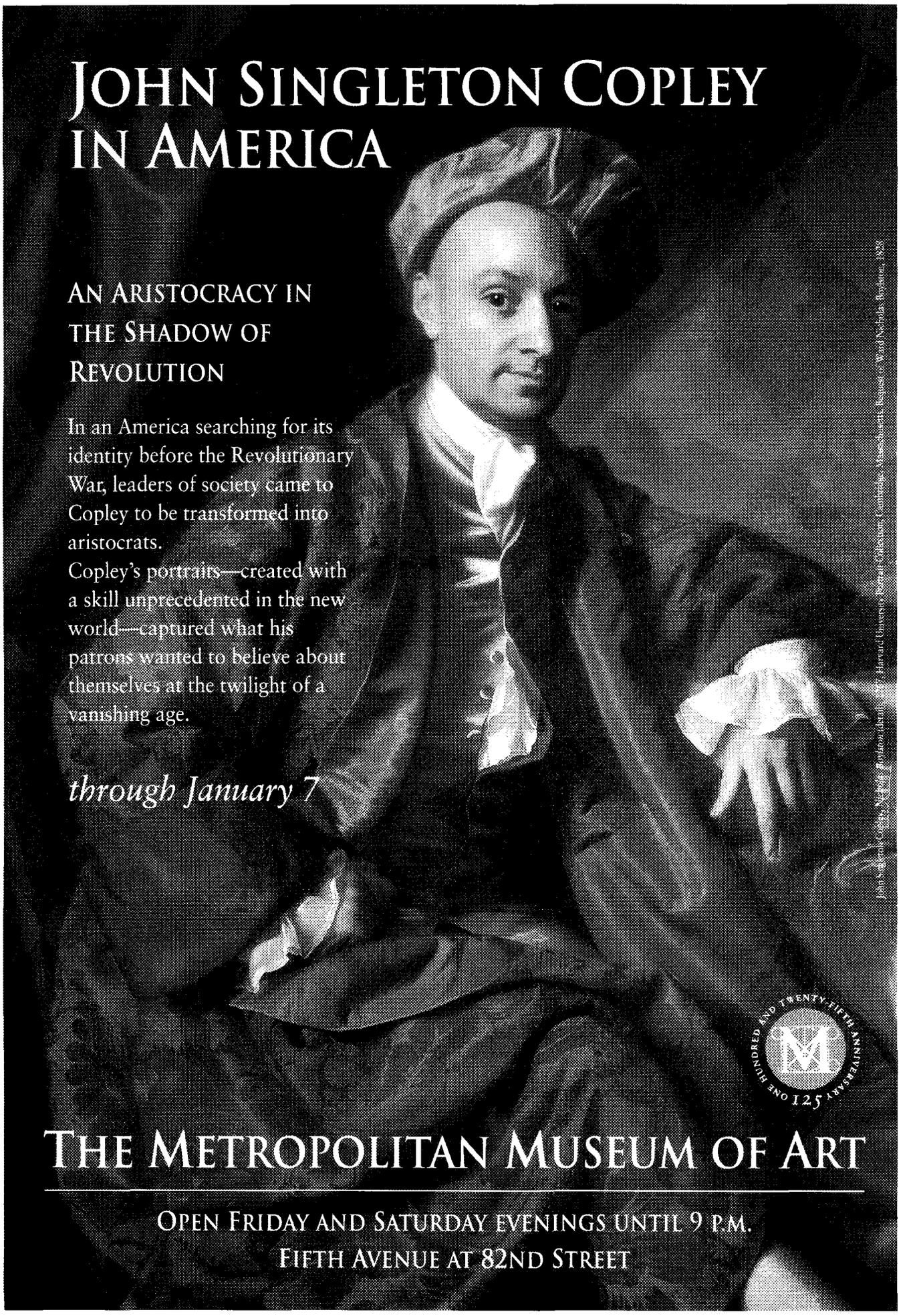
The blasting noise in this film, mostly of rock-club tumult, the frenetic cutting, the razzle-dazzle lighting, the deployment of vast crowds in the L.A. streets as both the year and the century come to an end, the wallowing in blood, all the harshness and smash, win for Bigelow the privilege that apparently she wants— the right to use the men's room. Other than this, the film has only one remarkable point, a coincidence. This is the second film in a week (the other is *Devil in a Blue Dress*) that underscores the brutality

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Clockers. *Spike Lee gives pyrotechnical texture to a commonplace story of black drug-dealing and murder in Brooklyn. (Reviewed 10/2/95)* **A Month by the Lake.** *A trifling, old-fashioned romance, but it has (a) Vanessa Redgrave; (b) Edward Fox; (c) Lake Como. (10/23/95)* **Showgirls.** *For those (like me) who respond to good tinsel. Lots of nudity and fake sex and trashy plot, but the Las Vegas nightclub dancing is terrific. (10/23/95)* **To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar.** *Patrick Swayze, Wesley Snipes and John Leguizamo scintillate here as three drag queens driving from N.Y. to L.A. Forget the script. (10/9/95)* **—SK**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY IN AMERICA



AN ARISTOCRACY IN THE SHADOW OF REVOLUTION

In an America searching for its identity before the Revolutionary War, leaders of society came to Copley to be transformed into aristocrats.
Copley's portraits—created with a skill unprecedented in the new world—captured what his patrons wanted to believe about themselves at the twilight of a vanishing age.

through January 7

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY 125

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

OPEN FRIDAY AND SATURDAY EVENINGS UNTIL 9 P.M.
FIFTH AVENUE AT 82ND STREET

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the LAPD toward blacks; and both films appear right after the Simpson verdict.

Apparently, outstanding British actors enjoy the chance to play sleazy Americans. Anthony Hopkins did it lately in *The Innocent*, and he's coming soon as Nixon. Here now is Fiennes, rolling about in grunge. All through this disgusting film I kept remembering that last year Fiennes played Hamlet in New York, a Hamlet that revealed his classical training and certified that, with a good director and supporting cast, he might give a memorable performance. Well, I hope he had fun in this substratum ramble.

Paul Auster has taken a different sort of holiday. The quintessence of Auster's work, in his novels and in the screenplay of *Smoke*, is design. He has been intensely concerned with the beauties, mysteries, false comforts of design. Now, in **Blue in the Face** (Miramax), design is out the window.

Auster and Wayne Wang, his colleague on *Smoke*, had some budget money left when they finished, got a bit more, and in the same Brooklyn cigar-store setting, they let Harvey Keitel and some other members of the cast improvise. Some stellar types, like Roseanne and Lily Tomlin and Madonna, were invited to join in. Only the roughest plan for each scene was sketched in advance.

An inviting idea, a dullish result. A few of the scenes, like the one with a boy who steals a purse, are sharp. Lou Reed lays in some savory comment from behind the cigar-store counter. Keitel's conversation with Jim Jarmusch has an edge. But most of the scenes, like the extended ones with Roseanne, run out of steam fairly quickly. The improvisational powers of the cast don't measure up to the opportunities they are given. Of the film's ninety minutes, a total of about twenty succeeds. Auster was right the first time. Design is better. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

Alice in Wilsonland

In a recent *New Yorker* article on Charles Dodgson, Adam Gopnik seeks to revise the popular view that the author of the most cherished books of children's literature, the avuncular cleric who called himself Lewis Carroll, was a man driven by dark abnormal impulses, particularly a passion for prepubescent girls. Reviewing Morton Cohen's new biography, Gopnik prefers to see Dodgson less as a stammering neurotic, one grope shy of being a child molester, than as a well-adjusted Oxford rationalist whose interest in such Victorian Lolitas as the 11-year-old Alice Liddell would have been considered relatively normal in its time. He makes this case even while acknowledging telling evidence to the contrary: Dodgson's banishment from the Liddell household (for reasons never disclosed), and Cohen's recent discovery of the Oxford clergyman's suggestive sepia snapshots of nude and semi-clad little girls—the kind of thing that would land a contemporary photographer in jail for child abuse (or else, as Gopnik notes, hired to do "a Calvin Klein campaign").

Though Gopnik lays too much stress on the sunniness of Dodgson's disposition, his effort to judge the man by the conventions of his time rather than our own is probably a healthy corrective to historical myopia. But it is easy to understand why modern artists, who live off the unconscious as their inspiration and material, have nevertheless been more attracted to the tenebrous side of the Dodgson mind. His revolutionary use of language in "Jabberwocky" famously inspired Joyce's invention of portmanteau words in that great dreambook *Finnegans Wake*. It also influenced the whole range of Absurdist theater, especially the verbal confusions in Ionesco. As for *Alice* in the theater, the André Gregory and Jonathan Miller stagings of these books in the '70s and '80s also tended to emphasize the irrational side of Dodgson's imagination, which is probably why Gopnik is so ready to write off Robert Wilson's version. "Wilson's piece," he sniffs, before even having seen it, "threatens to be an updated compendium of all these clichés."

As a matter of fact, it is completely original. While it is true that the Dodgson of **Alice** is hardly a happy Victorian logician, the pop opera Wilson has concocted with Tom Waits (music) and Paul Schmidt (book) is a reverie on the nature of dreaming and the human desire to stop time in its tracks. It is a theatrical examination, in other words, much like Calderon's *Life is a Dream* and Strindberg's *Ghost Sonata* and *A Dream Play*, of the links between dreaming and death. And like them, it is a haunting work of theater.

A companion piece to *The Black Rider*, which Wilson also created in collaboration with Germany's Thalia Theatre and Tom Waits (only William Burroughs is absent this time), *Alice* is a genuine contribution to a new form—the avant-garde musical spectacular—which makes *Miss Saigon* and *Phantom of the Opera* look like children's pantomimes. It is true that *Alice* seems to have been more hastily assembled than *The Black Rider*. In his crammed schedule of production abroad (now more than eight big pieces a year), Wilson is beginning to depend a lot more on striking lighting effects than on his scenic imagination, and his choreography, normally metrically precise, occasionally looked a bit jagged as executed by the Thalia chorus.

Still, the performances are admirable, and despite a few technical glitches, the American premiere at BAM was something of a triumph. Like *The Black Rider*, *Alice* shows Wilson in a highly playful, whimsical mood, working with the conventions of vaudeville comedy (he once confessed that the greatest influence on his sense of timing was Jack Benny). In the opening moments, before the houselights dim, eleven Dodgson-like figures, made up with dark goatees and starched hair, gradually multiply on stage (much like the replicated Einsteins in *Einstein on the Beach*) to perform a charming choreographic exercise in absolute silence.

After the house darkens, the real Charles Dodgson materializes (played by Stefan Kurt, who triples as the White Rabbit and the White Knight), hidden inside the folds of an enormous camera, from which he emerges singing one of Waits's seriocomic percussive songs ("Raindrops on the window and the ice in my drink. Baby, all I can think of is—Alice"). The photo he takes of his adored subject (Annette Paulmann in an Alice-blue gown) is accompanied by a loud magnesium explosion. It is this sound, and the accompanying smoke, which sends her into the fog of fable. Encouraged by Dodgson (now transformed into the White Rabbit) to "Drink Me," she downs the magic potion. And with the aid of shrinking scrims, expanding props and trick lighting, Alice shrinks to the size required to enter the rabbit hole.

Wilson has essentially translated Lewis Carroll's anecdotes into his own visual vocabulary, a language enhanced by Frida Parmegianni's eloquent couturier costumes. The Caterpillar sits atop a toadstool, his body gradually inflated into the proportions of a Macy's Thanksgiving Day float until the tail snaps around into a stinger's point. The Mad

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hatter's Tea Party is performed around a long metallic Wilson table to the accompaniment of shattering dishware. Humpty Dumpty squats on the wall, the actor's face protruding through the eggshell, as he advises Alice, "You cannot have a door in a wall—you lose the wallness of it."

Paul Schmidt's scenario (performed alternately in charmingly accented English and supertitled German) essentially correlates the fictional episodes of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* with the actual yearning of Dodgson for his unattainable love. Dodgson composes a series of letters to Alice which he crumples up and throws away (the Cheshire Cat, pouncing on each one in turn, paws them around the stage like balls of yarn). Later he burns them, realizing that "nothing in my life has ever been as real as the silence she brought me," thus reminding us how, after his death, Dodgson's niece burned pages from his diary dating from the period just before his exile from the Liddell home.

But more touching than the unrequited love story is the overpowering sense of loss and desolation caused by cormorant-devouring time. "I took a photo, made time stand still. Now it marches on," says Dodgson, in the act of admitting his guilt to the Black Queen. (She responds by shouting, "Off with his head.") Near the end, Alice thanks him for the fact that "the story has an end." But he has written one last poignant letter about mortality, a declaration that "neither of us is real and anything can happen and we only wake up when we die." The play ends with birds chirping and Alice, now an old woman, singing a final melancholy love song ("I remember you with leaves in your hair—but I'm still here.... You dreamed me up and left me here").

Alice is full of charming dreamscapes and vaudeville turns: the White Knight, in his pointed slitted helmet, doing dance steps and tripping on his feet, then making an exit with a woman's face on the back of his head; the White Sheep (an actress in a flowing platinum wig) endlessly crocheting from her own wool with long metallic needles; Alice crashing through the mirror to the sound of breaking glass; eight bald pasty-faced Victorian vicars in a chorus line, singing, "He corrected me in the rectory, that's why I'm feeling so blue"; a quiz show, conducted by Dodgson for Alice, in which she is required to solve a number of word puzzles printed on cards.

The only episode that seemed obtrusive, though it was visually stunning, represented Alice as a woman in her 40s, in a bright red gown, drinking whiskey and remembering her childhood photo session with Dodgson—("No matter how I moved, it wasn't enough.... I felt the tears coming and the screams coming, but I never blinked")—and of her dream life ("I dreamt of burnt bodies, of rusted pavilions")—as a dressmaker's dummy moves slowly off stage and the entire set turns crimson. It was one of the few moments when the infinite sadness of the piece became explicit, rather than being filtered through a screen of absurdity.

Wilson's *Alice* manages to enter that fabulous country where dreams, farce and madness exist in perfect unity, which is the land of the unconscious as imagined by an artist. Tom Waits's music and lyrics (with Kathleen Brennan), like his songs for *The Black Rider*, employ brass, woodwinds, percussion and keyboards as a smoky earthy contrast to the more ethereal quality of the staging. And the twelve members of the Thalia cast, led by Annette Paulmann's charming, slightly oafish Alice and Stefan Kurt's mournful Dodgson-Rabbit-Knight, display once again the supreme advantages of a well-subsidized permanent ensemble. What a shame it is that only Europe can regularly employ one of America's foremost theater artists, and that works such as *Alice* and *The Black Rider* can only be seen here on a brief visit to Brooklyn. But that is the kind of handicap we suffer in this artistic Third World.

What we produce instead are such clackety mechanical contrivances as **The Food Chain**. This brassy gay-oriented farce, coming so soon after Terrence McNally's *Love! Valour! Compassion!* and a growing number of similar mechanisms, is beginning to strain my tolerance for Camp. Nicky Silver has the capacity to imagine ludicrous situations, and he has a good ear for waspish dialogue. And although the play enjoys a few well-turned comic riffs (particularly one on how women are subjugated by their handbags), it relies too much on jokes that appeal to the sexual disposition of the audience.

I only laughed once during the evening (once more than during Silver's last play, *Raised in Captivity*), and that was when an enormously fat character, lying on the floor, stuffing himself with potato chips and chocolate candy, tried like a turtle lying on his shell to arrange his huge beached body into a position suitable for standing. Being a sight gag, it was one of the few jokes that didn't depend entirely on homosexual innuendo. Like Noel Coward's *Design for Living*, the mathematics of *The Food Chain* is a sex triangle, though Silver's components (a female poet, her screenwriting husband and a male model) comprise an openly bisexual equation. The love that dare not speak its name is now growing hoarse from shouting it.

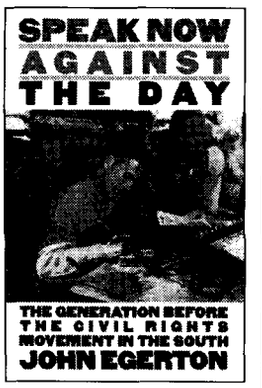
THE POWER OF RACE

NEW IN PAPERBACK

Speak Now Against the Day

The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement in the South

by John Egerton



"A stunning achievement: a sprawling, engrossing, deeply moving account of those Southerners, black and white, who raised their voices to challenge the South's racial mores.... [This] is an eloquent and passionate book, and... one we cannot afford to forget."—Charles B. Dew, New York Times Book Review

768 pp., 102 illus., $18.95 paper

Winner of the 1995 Robert F. Kennedy Book Award

Laws Harsh as Tigers

Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law

by Lucy E. Salyer

"At a time when immigration is again becoming a 'hot' issue, Lucy Salyer's brilliant explication and analysis of how the now infamous Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 shaped and transformed American immigration law is doubly welcome, both as an analysis of hysteria past and as a warning about the dangers of overzealous administration."
—Roger Daniels, University of Cincinnati

360 pp., $45.00 cloth, $17.95 paper

Studies in Legal History

at bookstores or by toll-free order

The University of North Carolina Press

Chapel Hill

Phone (800) 848-6224

Fax (800) 272-6817

http://sunsite.unc.edu/uncpress/

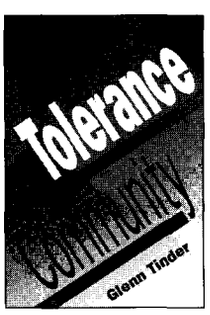
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"ONE OF OUR LEADING POST-MODERN CRITICS CAPTURES, in decorous prose, photographer Robert Mapplethorpe's putatively outrageous social and aesthetic vision....Incisive and passionate."
—KIRKUS REVIEWS

PLAYING WITH THE EDGE
The Photographic Achievement of Robert Mapplethorpe
by ARTHUR C. DANTO

31 photos, $24.95 hardcover
at bookstores or order 1-800-822-6657
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

Tolerance and Community
Glenn Tinder



Tinder argues persuasively in *Tolerance and Community* that to be civil is nothing less than to be civilized, and that we must move beyond the traditional arguments of John Locke and John Stuart Mill—rooted in individualism, rationalism, and historical optimism—toward a more communal and more realistic concept of tolerance. Substantiating his case with extensive evidence, Tinder shows that tolerance is at the core of civility and is crucial to any sort of humane future.
November, 256 pages, $39.95

University of Missouri Press
2910 LeMone Blvd
Columbia, MO 65201
1-800-828-1894
View our on-line catalog at
http://www.system.missouri.edu/upress/

William Ivy Long's costumes provide the wittiest elements of the evening, and Tom Lynch has designed an amusingly garish set (though I couldn't understand why the most conspicuous magazine in the rack of a poet who has published in *The New Yorker* should be *Modern Romance*). The director, Robert Falls, begins the piece, as he began *Raised in Captivity*, with a medley of captivating pop tunes, immediately drowned out by a patented farce style of such uniform pace and earsplitting pitch that one fears for the actors' throats. Some very accomplished people are performing in this hyperthyroid comedy, among them Hope Davis as the poet and Tom McGowran as the gargantuan gay. (His deafening delivery gives new meaning to the phrase "screaming queen.")

If the play owes a debt to the Terrence McNally School of Playwriting, almost all the performers belong to the Nathan Lane School of Acting. They explode at each other with such manic hysteria you become convinced you're in a room where LPs are being played top volume at 78 rpm. The one character who carries a trace of humanity is Phyllis Newman, playing a crisis hotline contact in a scene reminiscent of Elaine May's skit in *Death Defying Acts*. Newman doubles as a Jewish mother—one of the oldest stage clichés in the business, but about the only one Nicky Silver creates with any dimension. *The Food Chain* is a play written for people who only read the Style and Arts and Leisure sections of *The New York Times*. It confirms a growing suspicion that almost everyone has deserted the New York theater except the insiders who helped produce it. •

It's A Wonderful Lifer

BY NICHOLAS LEMANN

My American Journey by Colin L. Powell with Joseph E. Persico

(Random House, 643 pp., $25.95)

Colin Powell's autobiography is packaged as a success story: "THE LIFE STORY OF A YOUNG BOY FROM THE BRONX WHO GREW UP TO LIVE THE AMERICAN DREAM," says the back jacket. The packaging certainly doesn't misrepresent the book, but it leaves unsaid certain things that are essential to its allure, such as that Powell is black and that he might be running for president. What leaps out from the book is another particularity of Powell's success, one that has somehow been missing in all the discussion of him. *My American Journey* is the success story of a Lifer, and *that* is what is most interesting about it.

Lifers are one of the three types of successful people in America today. The other two are Mandarins and Talents. They are named for the different paths that they take to get ahead. Mandarins are the products of what we think of as the American meritocracy: the formal machinery of mass mental testing and educational selection that was set up a half-century ago. Talents are big shots without résumés, who made it in open-entry, unorganized fields such as entrepreneurial business and the arts. Lifers are career bureaucrats, the best of whom rise to run large, important organizations in government and the corporate world. For Mandarins, life's great hurdle is admission to elite schools, beginning with nursery schools. For Talents, it is market tests. (For Talents in politics, that means Election Day.) Lifers operate in systems where the winnowing out occurs continually and not at the point of entry, and so they are essentially concerned with getting promotions.

Of the three types, the one that's getting by far the most attention in American higher journalism and pop sociology is Mandarins. Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray's "cognitive elite" and Michael Lind's "overclass" are essentially Mandarins, with the extent of their dominance of the ranks of the successful wildly overstated. In fact, Mandarins are fully in control only in the professions. Talents, at the high end, have far more money, power and fame. And the poor Lifers have been practically forgotten. It's as a Lifer, not as an African American, that Colin Powell can be counted as an invisible man.

In the 1950s, Lifers were the subject of countless books and movies that patronized them but at least treated them as important: *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* and the rest. Today you read about them only in bathetic stories about the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

victims of corporate downsizing. What is so interesting about Powell's tale is that the present obscurity of the Lifer culture, combined with the completeness of Powell's commitment to it, imparts a sense of freshness, a spirited quality, even a feeling of illumination, to his story. In the context of Powell-mania, *My American Journey* is positively puzzling, because it makes the ongoing fan-dance about finding out who Powell really is and what Powell really believes unnecessary. The real Powell is hiding in plain sight, in the pages of his own memoir.

Colin Powell's book, it's true, is in large measure a Horatio Alger story (at one point he even attends something called "the Horatio Alger dinner"), which takes him from the bosom of a struggling but strong immigrant family in the Bronx to unimaginable prominence. Some of the classic touches of American success literature are here, such as the improbable lucky break (his father finds a dream house he can't afford in Queens—and then hits the number, winning just enough money for the down payment); the series of fortuitous link-ups with rough, kindly mentors (Major Powell pulls his unconscious two-star commanding general out of the wreckage of a downed helicopter); and the marriage "up" (Alma Powell was the daughter of an Alabama school superintendent—the black equivalent, in that time and place, of a bank president—and went to Fisk University, then famous as a "blue-vein" school). None of this, however, generates the real energy in *My American Journey*. That comes from Powell's rise up the military ladder, which he makes genuinely dramatic and interesting.

Mandarins are almost always outstanding students; but Powell, in the fourth grade, was put in the slow-learners' track in a South Bronx public school. Later he recovered sufficiently to apply to Stuyvesant High School, but he didn't get in. By his account he was a happy, indifferent kid until he joined the ROTC unit at City College and instantly, permanently found "what I craved": "The discipline, the structure, the camaraderie, the sense of belonging" of the military. That happened when he was 17. He mustered out, unusually late because of his high rank, at 56. The totality of his adult experience, in other words, occurred in uniform. He repeatedly praises the Army as the best institution in America. All the paraphernalia and the customs of military life seem to give him comfort and pleasure: he likes uniforms, drilling on the parade ground, badges, medals, shined shoes, lines of authority, punctuality, officers' clubs, the Pentagon. This is his world, what he is first. His political identity and his racial identity are subordinate to his military one.

Never, ever, does Powell lose sight of where he stands in the Army hierarchy. At the age of 49, when he is offered the job of deputy national security adviser, his immediate reaction is to fret that his military career will be damaged. He resolves the dilemma by insisting that President Reagan personally ask him so that "my world will understand." For those outside the military it may seem absurd for a Washington player at that level to be worried about Pentagon promotion boards, but Powell's terror seems real. A year later, when he is promoted to the head job at the NSC, there is another cloud on the horizon: the White House might want him to take a demotion from three-star general to two-star so he won't have to be confirmed by the Senate. (He gets through his hearings, with great relief.)

All this is the quasi-vestigial worrying of the late Powell career. In the early days, when it really matters, every assignment is weighed with intense care for how it will affect his chances for promotion, and every promotion is an occasion of real emotion. When Powell is told that he's going to make major early, "I walked out of that office on air." When he gets his brigadier general's star, "I acted ... like a kid on Christmas morning." The tensest moment in the plot of Powell's book has nothing to do with the Gulf war or Vietnam; it comes when, in 1982, already a general, he gets a lukewarm officer efficiency report ("promote with contemporaries" instead of "promote ahead of contemporaries") for the first time in his career, from the commanding general of Fort Carson, Colorado, because of his mishandling of a matter of military-wife etiquette. (Powell had gone to the general and said, "Sir, I think we could do more with the wives. They are not as involved as they should be." This was received as an insult to Fort Carson's first lady.) Is it all over? No. He is "brought back from the dead" by friends in the Pentagon.

Over the years Powell has punched just about every ticket that is available to a fast-burning Army officer: Rangers, Pathfinders, the Infantry Officers Advanced Course, Command and General Staff College, the National War College, an advanced degree at a civilian school, a White House Fellowship. (In every case he remembers, and tells us, his rank in class.) Many of these moves are accompanied by new housing and a new car, again described in loving detail, with particular reference to the effect on Alma. The young Powell was clearly very much aware that he had to prove himself to his

ST. MARTIN'S PRESS

FDR and the Holocaust

Edited by ***Verne W. Newton***

This collection of original pieces and anthologized articles grew out of the discussions held during two successive days at the Roosevelt Library. The contributors take a hard look at FDR's reaction to the Holocaust, offering a timely and thought-provoking study.

Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute Series on Diplomatic and Economic History

1995 • 304 pp. • $49.95 cl.

Telltale Hearts

The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement

Adam Garfinkle

Preface by

Stephen E. Ambrose

"Adam Garfinkle's absorbing book ... is vigorously argued and brings a new and unexpected point of view to a subject that seemed to have been exhausted years ago by arguments that grew ever coarser as they grew louder."

— The New York Times Book Review

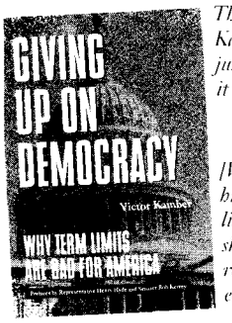
1995 • 352 pp. • $24.95 cl.

SCHOLARLY & REFERENCE DIVISION

1 • 8 0 0 • 2 2 1 • 7 9 4 5

NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER!

THE DEFINITIVE BOOK ON WHY TERM LIMITS ARE BAD FOR AMERICA



This volume by Victor Kamber is more than just timely and welcome, it is essential.
REP. HENRY J. HYDE
(from the preface)

[Victor Kamber's] history of the term limits movement... should be mandatory reading for those on either side of the debate.
SEN. BOB KERREY
(from the preface)

Deep Throat said 'Follow the money.' That's what Victor Kamber has done in this illuminating look at who funds the term limits movement.
— ELEANOR CLIFT

A fascinating and frightening tale of voter manipulation. — GERALDINE A. FERRARO

REGNERY

Available in bookstores, or by calling:
1-800-883-4774

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

high-class wife and her family; he must have spent years promising that all the disruption and the relative deprivation that goes along with being a rising officer's wife was going to lead to a big payoff later. When he gets the job of deputy commander of the Combined Arms Combat Development Activity at Fort Leavenworth, "Alma finally had her mansion. And I, at long last, was redeemed in her eyes."

Outsiders tend to leap to the conclusion that all Lifers are dull, unimaginative, insulated time-servers—that even the best ones are not much more than overgrown Boy Scouts. Powell's book is a useful correction of the stereotype: he demonstrates the actual strengths, and the actual weaknesses, of the breed. He is extremely shrewd. During the periods when it was his job to be aide to a powerful man, he quietly noticed a lot and made fortuitous alliances. His racquetball partner during the late 1970s was not some other field-grade officer, it was Prince Bandar. His early mentors included such legendary players of the Washington game as Fred Malek, Joseph Laitin, Frank Carlucci and John Kester. (They are not very well known to the general public, but that's the point.) In the book, as no doubt in life, he attends closely to ensuring that he gets the credit for what he did (revising the Kuwait battle plan away from a massive frontal assault) and avoids the blame for what he didn't (not pursuing Saddam Hussein the whole way to Baghdad).

Powell's cameos of the powerful people with whom he has come into contact are amazingly astute, and less generous than has been appreciated. He records Caspar Weinberger's superstitious removal from his office wall of a portrait of a predecessor who committed suicide, and also the moments during the run-up to the Gulf war when Richard Cheney and Norman Schwartzkopf lost their composure. One reason that Powell cuts so impressive a figure at the podium is that career military officers spend years learning how to brief well. It comes as no surprise to learn from Powell that he laboriously crafted such memorable lines from the Bush administration as "a line in the sand," "extreme hostile intent" and "first we cut it off and then we kill it."

The virtues of the Lifer are loyalty, toughness, administrative competence, practicality, realism and an absence of snobbery. Powell seems to have all of these virtues, and he doesn't have much respect for Mandarins, who lack them. Mandarins—even hawkish ones, as Powell duly notes—don't serve in the military; and they don't accept hardship assignments (Powell did two tours in Vietnam and one tour in Korea, all away from his family); and they don't think through the consequences of their intellectually neat policy positions. Answering one of the classic personality-test questions without being asked it, Powell says he would rather tinker with an old car than read a book. It is a little odd for the author of a memoir far superior to the run of hasty official autobiographies to begin his book by making excuses for having written it ("the commercial prospects could not be ignored"), as if he's afraid we'd think he is the kind of person who wants to write books.

For Powell, "intellectual" and "expert" and "academic" are pejoratives. He shows what kind of credentials don't impress him when he calls George Stephanopoulos "a high school valedictorian with a good tailor." When he was at the National Security Council, he recounts with great pride, his meetings had inviolate printed agendas and lasted "exactly one hour." When he was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Every morning at precisely 0831 hours I entered the Joint Staff conference room for an 0830 meeting. My principal staff officers, most two- and three-star generals and admirals, knew they had one minute to avoid being late." He doesn't openly criticize Bill Clinton, but he does mention his problems with punctuality and focus in a way that makes it clear that he can't fully respect him. This principle seems to apply to Democrats generally: they're sloppy, they're good at the wrong things.

The vices of the Lifer are caution and a tendency to be unable to see beyond the narrow interests of the organization. Powell has these vices, too. Here is his first reaction upon receiving news of the My Lai massacre from a military investigator: " ... both my curiosity and my guard were up. I asked if he would excuse me while I called the division chief of staff." Elsewhere, in a resonant passage about how to deal with absurd, body-count-like bureaucratic requirements, he lays out this view:

> You pay the king his shilling, get him off your back, and then go about doing what you consider important.... I vigorously set out to better every [idiotic] indicator by which my brigade was statistically judged. And then went on to do the things that I thought counted. I detected a common thread running through the careers of officers who ran aground even though they were clearly able—a stubbornness about coughing up that shilling. They fought what they found foolish or irrelevant, and consequently did not survive to do what they considered vital.

In keeping with the notion that the simplest hypothesis is the best one, we ought to consider the possibility that most of Powell's thinking consists of the standard views of a career Army officer of his generation. In the policy realm, certainly, he knows only one big thing: no more Vietnams. Powell understands the mistake that was made in Vietnam, and the suffering that was inflicted there, on narrowly Army terms. The "Powell doctrine" is sincerely felt, but it is essentially the post-Vietnam Army position projected onto a big screen. We are supposed to avoid unclear and symbolic foreign missions, and to insist on overwhelming superiority and the near-certainty of victory, in order to avoid long-running foreign entanglements that will lead to the public's blaming the military for the mistakes of civilians. Powell was hostile to the Contras not because he didn't believe in the cold war, but because they reminded him of the Diem forces with whom he fought in Vietnam. He was hostile to bombing in Bosnia at least partly for an even narrower reason, which is that he spent decades watching with exasperation as the Air Force guys convinced diplomats that bombing could solve their political problems, and then had to send infantrymen to die so that the mission could be completed.

The accusation that Powell is a political general rather than a field general is clearly true—after his return from Vietnam in 1969, he spent only two brief periods in command of troops—but it should not be taken to mean that he is primarily a political person rather than a military person. Being a political general is something he feels guilty about: he calls it a "suspicion, sometimes in my own soul." And his long succession of political assignments is testament in part to the military's desire to place somebody in the E Ring and the White House who could look out for its interests.

To judge from his book, Powell's inscrutability should not be taken to mean that he possesses an elaborate worldview which he has not yet chosen to unveil. In fact, there may be only the single great lesson he derived from his military life. The "Powell doctrine" seems to be the beginning and the end of his passionately held principles. Powell inhabits a different planet from theory-of-history types such as Newt Gingrich (whom he doesn't mention) or Richard Perle (whom he does mention, dismissively). It is inconceivable, given his experience, that he would partake of a melodramatic vision according to which government is a spent force in human affairs that must be dismantled. He says that the one job Clinton dangled before him that had the most appeal was running Americorps, which Gingrich will

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

probably succeed in abolishing. Yes, Powell works in a few sentences praising the free-enterprise system, but it has played only a minor role in his own incredible success and that of his large, substantially government-employed extended family. Could it be that the true emotional source of his loyalty to the market is that he knows it was the bounty of our economy, more than the superiority of our military, that enabled us to win the cold war?

It is a part of the business of a potential president to have a position on everything. Powell has begun to take a few such positions—but the important point, to judge from *My American Journey*, is that these positions are lightly held and not part of a larger philosophical scheme. He makes it obvious that if he were president he would function pragmatically, case by case, with his own taste and his own experience, rather than any overarching set of principles, as his guide:

> ... I had developed a decision-making philosophy. Put simply, it is to dig up all the information you can, then go with your instincts. We all have a certain intuition, and the older we get, the more we trust it. When I am faced with a decision ... I dredge up every scrap of knowledge I can. I call in people. I phone them. I read whatever I can get my hands on. I use my intellect to inform my instinct. I then use my instinct to test all this data. "Hey, instinct, does this sound right? Does this smell right, feel right, fit right?"

The last Lifer to become a national hero, and a possible president, was Lee Iacocca, and he wasn't the real article because his stature was based on what he did after he left the Ford Motor Company, his bureaucracy of origin. The last Lifer-hero in government was probably Dwight Eisenhower. Eisenhower, like Powell, knew how to go with his instincts, but he also won the greatest military victory in the history of the world.

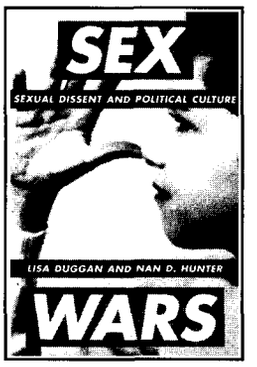
The Powell phenomenon is a tiny bit about the Gulf war (which didn't do much, after all, for the presidential ambitions of George Bush, James Baker and Richard Cheney); a little more about an inchoate longing, especially in a press corps already bored by Clinton-versus-Dole, for a dramatic third force in American politics; and a great deal about race. Retired chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who are white don't inflame the national imagination.

For whites, Powell offers racial absolution. Most white people don't think of themselves as prejudiced, and they don't like the idea that the country is deeply flawed or divided. A Powell presidency would somehow prove that we're all right after all, with the possible additional benefit of causing blacks to stop bellyaching all the time. (Marjorie Williams of *Vanity Fair* recently got Charles Kelly, the head of Citizens for Powell, to express almost exactly this thought for quotation.) Powell is also one of the few blacks to evoke in whites the standard black thought that to make it in the white world, you have to be twice as good.

For blacks, Powell has the much more straightforward appeal of being "one of us" and therefore likely to have some kind of empathy that most whites lack. Powell has taken care to signal that this is indeed the case by coming out for affirmative action and against the elimination of welfare. What he is not, however, is a "black leader," or an important reformulator of the meaning of African Americanness. And that is essential to his appeal to whites: there's a feeling that he's the rare black person who, if brought into the room where the big quiet decisions are made, wouldn't immediately begin lobbying to change the system on behalf of the race.

But whites wildly overestimate the symbolic power of a Powell presidency to solve our racial problems. The black breakthrough figures most admired by whites, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Frederick Douglass, were geniuses, agitators and obsessives who were consumed with the "Negro question"; they didn't achieve what they achieved merely

ROUTLEDGE



Sex Wars
Sexual Dissent and Political Culture
Lisa Duggan and **Nan D. Hunter**
"....refreshing....This historic compilation is an important contribution to the field of sexual politics."
— *Library Journal*
288 pp $16.95/Pb

War Stories
The Culture of Foreign Correspondents
Mark Pedelty
"... Read into this book anywhere and you will be struck by its thoughtfulness and astuteness."
— *Todd Gitlin, Director of Mass Communications Program, UC Berkeley*
272 pp $16.95/Pb

White Racism
The Basics
Joe R. Feagin and **Hernán Vera**
Reveals this "dirty little secret of American life" as a social problem deeply embedded in culture, the law, international relations, and daily rhythms of life.
224 pp $16.95/Pb

Civilizing Rituals
Art Museums as Public Spaces
Carol Duncan
Illuminates the ways in which museums engage their visitors in the performance of ritual scenarios and through them affirm ideas, values and social identities.
Re Visions
192 pp $16.95/Pb
70 illustrations

Michael Harrington
Speaking American
Robert A. Gorman
"A wealth of information, not only about Harrington's rich political and intellectual life and influence, but about the dilemmas of the leftist tradition in America as well."
— *William Julius Wilson, University of Chicago*
American Radicals
244 pp $16.95/Pb

William Appleman Williams
The Tragedy of Empire
Paul Buhle and **Edward Rice-Maximin**
"This lucid intellectual biography makes Williams accessible to a new generation coming to grips with empire as an American way of life."
— *Alfred F. Young, Newberry Library*
American Radicals
320 pp $18.95/Pb

Paperbacks also available in hardback editions

ROUTLEDGE, 29 West 35th Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10001-2299
http: / /www.routledge.com/routledge.html
AT BOOKSTORES, or from ROUTLEDGE, CUSTOMER SERVICE
Phone 800-634-7064
Visa/MasterCard/Amex accepted

ROUTLEDGE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by existing as silent, noble presences. Powell as president would be under constant pressure from blacks to embrace black nationalism. His white constituents, on the other hand, seem to think that Powell isn't going to want to tax them to improve conditions in black America. Not likely: every government racial initiative Powell describes, he portrays as an unalloyed success.

Powell's book contains nothing at all about how America should handle its dilemma, except to imply that it would help a lot to end overt discrimination. The main racial news in the book is that, to recast a remark that Powell makes about Reagan, the general feels comfortable in his own skin color. *My American Journey* lacks the pain, the anger and the confusion that we find in the autobiographies of blacks who rose to prominence from a poor, all-black environment, such as *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* or *Black Boy*, and it lacks also the assimilationist anxieties found in the memoirs of children of the black Establishment who early entered an integrated world, such as Roger Wilkins or Stephen Carter. Powell has an ethnic consciousness rather than a caste consciousness. Being black is part, but not all, of his public self.

Thus he joins an informal black officers' organization and pushes for a monument to the Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Leavenworth, but lets the black-power movement proceed without him. He jokes about lacking "the basketball and dance genes." He says things that, much more than his recent public remarks, would imperil any race-man status he might have, such as "the Somalis were apparently feeling sufficiently well nourished to begin killing each other" and "we are currently witnessing the chaos that occurs when states revert to anarchy, tribalism, and feudalism," citing only African nations as examples.

What Powell does not do is wrestle with the tough questions. Perhaps he hasn't had to wrestle with them in his life so far, or perhaps he hasn't wanted to. In the course of recounting dozens of job offers, only once does he mention being wanted because of being black (and he turned the job down). The implication is that all the other times race was not a factor or a negative factor to be overcome, and that the same applies to America. He objects to the Willie Horton ad, but he lavishly praises Reagan and Bush and never mentions their social-welfare policies, or social-welfare policy generally. He deals with the question of what stance prominent blacks ought to adopt by saying that "a movement requires many different voices." He specifically praises Eldridge Cleaver, Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown on the grounds that "the tirades of the agitators were like a fire bell ringing in the night, waking up defenders of the status quo with the message that change had better be on the way," while insisting on the importance of his own quieter contribution. Invited to speak at Morris High School in the Bronx, his alma mater, a good school then but not a good school now, he responds to this example of disastrous change over a generation by telling the students, "When I was coming up, the opportunities were limited. But now they are there. You can be anything you want to be."

Presidential candidates are usually not Mandarins or Lifers, but Talents — especially third-party candidates. Ross Perot lasted about ten minutes, at IBM, as a Lifer; Powell, in a similar position, would have stayed and become CEO, not left to start his own company. After every election, Mandarins get the Cabinet positions and Lifers operate the government. The protagonist of *My American Journey* is an implausible presidential candidate, not because he doesn't seem up to the job, but because he isn't risk-prone and self-dramatizing enough for it.

Ronald Reagan's first autobiography, *Where's the Rest of Me?*, began with the young Reagan opening the front door to find his father passed out drunk on the steps. Powell informs us that "our earliest memories usually involve a trauma, and mine does," but the trauma turns out to have been an accidental electric shock that left a residue "not of the shock and pain, but of feeling important, being the center of attention, seeing how much they loved and cared about me." Do people this happy and this normal run for president? Powell pretty clearly would like to run the country, but in 600 pages he doesn't display the tiniest hint of wanting fundamentally to shake up the political system, or any system. His "doctrine" is about the avoidance of risk. Agreeing to serve a term as vice president in the expectation of a presidential anointment four years later would be entirely in keeping with his way of operating so far.

Every national craze rests atop some large underlying problem. In the case of the obsession with Powell, the problem is contemporary American dissatisfaction not with the political system but with the success-distribution system. We have spent fifty years elaborately creating a meritocratic leadership class, the Mandarins, and now that we've got them we don't like them. The Mandarins come across (except to themselves) as arrogant, culturally liberal and egotistical out of proportion to their accomplishment. It doesn't help that the Mandarin selection system generates racial and ethnic divisions even more stark than those that existed previously (except, of course, in the Jim Crow South). *Forrest Gump* was all about hating Mandarins and imagining an alternative America where individual success, decency, and racial and class comity all go together. Even *The Bell Curve*, for all its defense of the success-distribution system, was fundamentally anti-Mandarin.

So what can solve the Mandarin problem? A Lifer on a white horse, who represents an undeservedly obscured, fairer and better success-distribution system. Colin Powell is only the first of them.

NICHOLAS LEMANN is a national correspondent for *The Atlantic Monthly*.

The Trouble With Harry

BY C.K. WILLIAMS

The Poet Dying: Heinrich Heine's Last Years in Paris by Ernst Pawel

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 277 pp., $23)

Imagine a poet with the lyrical delicacy of Campion, the self-dramatizing flair of Byron (he called himself the German Byron) the wit of Burns, the satirical ferocity of Swift; a poet who also wrote prose like a more political Sterne, with that much verve, that much hilariously digressive amplitude, wrote enormous quantities of it, on every subject, from politics to art to philosophy and religion to folk traditions, revolutionizing prose-writing in his language while he was at it; a poet who lived through one of the most turbulent and fascinating periods of Western history—and you will have Harry Heine, the son of a failed businessman, born in Dusseldorf in 1797,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who died Heinrich Heine, a famous poet and social critic, in Paris in 1856, admired, and sometimes despised, in all the countries of Europe. (And in the Americas as well: the first edition of his complete works was a pirated version published in Philadelphia.)

Now take that enormous, seemingly undeniable figure and blur him, almost erase him; make his poetry untranslatable, at least in the dominant poetic modes of our time (imagine a poet with the visionary scope of Whitman writing in the meters of Poe); and make a good portion of his prose seem dated, almost quaint. Heine's primary analytical and polemical tools were irony and satire, which are so intricately woven into the particulars of their occasion that they often don't age very well, and lose the edge of their indignation, the pressures of their conviction. His poetry untuned, his prose distempered, what happens to Heine? Do we lose him, and condemn him to a footnoted life in comp lit?

The late Ernst Pawel had the felicitous notion of using the story of Heine's grueling and noble death to resurrect him for us. Pawel also provides a concise recreation of his social and political moment, and he restores Heine as the powerful cultural protagonist that he was considered to be in his own time. And although he never quite says so, Pawel, who wrote a celebrated study of Kafka called *The Nightmare of Reason*, also wants to make of Heine one of those heroes, like Kafka, who are an essential element of our intellectual identity.

Even for an experienced biographer like Pawel, this is not an easy endeavor. For one thing, there's the problem of Heine's poetry in English. It has been rather brutally treated. Listen to Schubert's setting of Heine's little poem "The Doppelgänger" in the *Schwanengesang* cycle, and you will hear a passionate, tempestuous love story charged with a rich and convincing pathos, a miniature three-act tragedy. Then read the version by Hal Draper, whose dutiful translation of the complete poems has become the standard version in English, and you will hear something else:

> The night is still, the streets are dumb,
> This is the house where dwelt my dear;
> Long since she's left the city's hum
> But the house stands in the same place
> here...

This is the first stanza. And it could have been worse. A passage from a recent translation of the same poem reads:

> When of a morning early
> I happen to pass your place,
> I am happy to see you, dear girlie,
> Stand at the window case.

But we shouldn't entirely blame the translators. The reasons a poet can't be brought across a language barrier have to do with larger matters of literary tradition and taste. (Witness Nabokov's ill-fated effort to do Pushkin in English; despite the former's assurances to the contrary, the latter's genius remains as obscure to the American reader as ever.) Given the musical norms of contemporary American poetry, there's probably no way to make more than barely acceptable versions of Heine. Except for *The North Sea*, a book written in free-verse, Heine used a regular line, most often the four-beat line of German folk-song, whose austerities served him as a way of purifying some of the emotional excesses of romantic poetry.

The result is that most of his verse simply chimes too much for our taste. For us, relentlessly regular verse has too long a history of humor, of irony at best and farce at worst. Palgrave's anthology, and Robert Service and company, have enervated that music. We still love and value regular verse, to be sure; but as the conflicts and the vexations of the poets more closely approach our own, we want a verse that strains against the measured line, or overflows into free-verse. We prefer Keats to Byron, Wordsworth to Pope, Dickinson to Poe.

Heine himself recognized the prob-

WordsWorth On-Line... Virtually the Only Way to Buy Books

"Heaven for book lovers..." —NetGuide

WordsWorth Books of Harvard Square, the nation's preeminent bookstore, has made its selection of new books—from over a thousand publishers—available to users on the Internet.

- **Every book discounted (except textbooks)**
- **On-line catalogue of over 100,000 titles**
- **Worldwide shipping (including next day)**

WORDSWORTH BOOKS

800.899.2202
fax 617.354.4674

http://www.wordsworth.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lem. He detested the imperious strictures of French classical verse, and called it "rhymed belching." The translations of his work into French that he found most satisfying were by his friend Gérard de Nerval; Nerval's versions, he said, "grasped the essence" of his poems. Nerval was a metrical poet of genius, but he translated Heine's poems into prose, into a marvelously supple, luminous prose. These are the most satisfying translations of Heine I know, but they work resolutely against the musical identity of the originals.

But there are other difficulties in trying to make Heine live for us. In his poetry and his prose, Heine depended a great deal on irony and satire, and he was often very funny. ("The despairing republican who plunges a dagger into his heart, like Brutus, may have smelt the dagger beforehand in case it had been used to cut up a herring.") We prefer our exemplary figures more somber, more solemn, even grim, even suicidal. It's hard for us to believe that a wag such as Byron could have been considered one of the most important figures of his time. And the same is true of Heine.

Despite their humor, of course, both Byron and Heine were completely, deadly serious; and in some ways Heine may have been too serious for his own good. He was generally considered as far and away the best German poet of his generation. He was enormously popular in his time and after: there are some 8,000 musical settings of his poems by 2,500 composers, including Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Liszt and Ives. He was much beloved in the German-speaking states, at least until he began to alienate his audience with his attacks on the nationalism that had made its ugly, violent and anti-Semitic appearance both on the Right and the Left, and with the skeptical tensions of his later poetry, which made it less accessible to a public which had come to expect a romanticism whose emotional excesses he had consciously set out to purify.

He was also detested on other grounds. Carlyle called him a "...slimy and greasy Jew — fit only to eat sausages made of toads." Heine was routinely vilified as a Jew, a fate which was painfully ironic to him. He never hid the fact that he was born a Jew; he was unashamedly attached to Jewish history and tradition, and he wrote a number of poems and an unfinished novel, *The Rabbi of Bacherach*, which incorporated and sometimes celebrated that history and that tradition. For most of his life, however, he was a passionate Deist, and he tended to make little of his Jewishness, as well as of his youthful conversion to Christianity. That conversion was clearly a matter of convenience, meant to qualify him for a university appointment (in law) that he never received anyway. He scorned Felix Mendelssohn for his more sincere Christian convictions: "if I had the luck of being a grandson of Moses Mendelssohn," he wrote, "I would surely not use my talent to set the pissing of the Lamb to music." But Germany was no longer the haven of tolerance that the elder Mendelssohn and his friend Lessing had thought it to be; Heine did suffer anti-Semitic attacks, and even his regular contributions to the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* were identified in the paper's editorial offices by a Star of David.

Courtesy Bettmann Archive

HEINRICH HEINE BY CHARLES GLEYRE

The problem that present-day readers have with Heine is that, except in the disciplines of his poetic composition, he wasn't careful. He was an energetic, sometimes fanatical self-promoter, but he wasn't cunning or cold-blooded enough to care very much about the glances of posterity. His passionate earnestness about so many different issues, which made his writing so fascinating to his contemporaries, works against him as a culture-hero. He could write more or less systematically about rather abstruse matters, as in his vivacious essay "On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany," which helped to introduce German thought to French readers. He also wrote books and articles on current political events, morals and manners, music, theater and literature, among other things. And he was not above pure and simple gossip in his reporting on the society of the French capital to his German-speaking newspaper audiences, and could be scathing in his criticism of German life in his voluminous writing for French readers.

Heine, in other words, has none of that reticence, that holding back for the effect of mystery, which in our time implies profundity; there's not enough shadow in his light. What an advantage Kafka's circumspection gives him over a blabbermouth like Heine, who has an opinion about everything, who attacks everyone, and when he is attacked himself strikes back powerfully, often changing his mind while he's at it. Heine had the unendearing habit of projecting his own shortcomings onto others, often onto his friends, and then pillorying them for their errors.

There is not even a good likeness of Heine. The extant paintings and drawings look like portraits of different people, one a rather corpulent self-absorbed aesthete, another an emaciated forlorn lover, one more a dying Christ-like martyr. Even people who knew Heine personally seemed to have manifested a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

puzzling uncertainty about his physical appearance. One acquaintance gives him in one place black hair and in another place brown hair; and most people who knew him said he was dark blond. The only likeness that looks at least like *somebody* — it shows a young man with a haircut so awful that he has to have been real—is a bronze relief by David d'Angers, which has the disadvantage of being in relief, and lacks the character-intensifying high-contrast to which we are accustomed in images of cultural icons.

And yet Pawel succeeds admirably in bringing Heine to life. By focusing on the terrible last years, when Heine was almost completely confined to what he called his "mattress grave" but was still writing, Pawel tempers the occasional harshness of Heine's character, and presents for us a writer elevated by suffering to a more exalted, stoical, self-denying level than Heine himself would have believed possible. His book has an intricate fugal structure which intercuts Heine's life with political and social events, and in this way Pawel gives a strong sense of what a turbulent, terrifically interesting epoch Heine lived through. It was a period of revolution and reaction, of social and political upheaval and spectacular economic expansion. In his books and his journalism Heine managed to situate himself at the very center of his time.

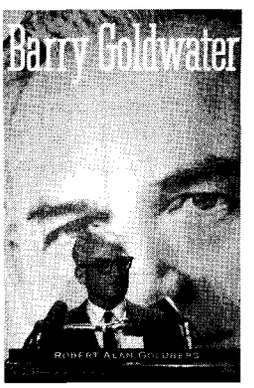
About the more intimate aspects of Heine's life, Pawel can sometimes seem a bit too partisan. Disinterestedness and objectivity are not absolute virtues in a biographer, but Pawel is often irritatingly sniffy about almost everyone—no, about everyone—with whom Heine came into contact. Heine's brother Gustav, with whom "he has nothing in common other than a mother remote in every sense of the word," is "tactless, pig-headed, aggressive ... monumentally obtuse...." Heine's cousin Carl, the son of his very wealthy banker uncle with whom he struggled, often in public, his whole adult life, was "a decorticate bully with no perceptible capacity for human relations ... a troglodyte millionaire." All of Heine's family members are finally lumped together as "the gangsters to whom Heine had the misfortune of being related." Julius Campe, Heine's long-time publisher, with whom Heine had a conflicted, oedipal, but finally mostly affectionate relationship is "Mephistopheles ... not reluctant to squeeze out what little blood was left in [Heine's] pitiable skeleton...." Karl Marx "... knew very little about people, including himself."

If Pawel admits for a moment that Heine's sister Charlotte's memories of him "reflect genuine sisterly love," he quickly qualifies by announcing that "they may have been somewhat prettified for the benefit of posterity." After Heine's death, his wife, whom he had re-christened Mathilde, engages "a slimy shyster of a lawyer" to represent her in the sale of Heine's papers. And the intriguing Camille Selden, the "La Mouche" who befriended Heine at the very end, becoming his secretary and his last, necessarily Platonic love-interest, was "probably neither as young or innocent as he may have believed."

By diminishing everyone around Heine, Pawel threatens to shrink Heine's own scale. And sometimes one feels like coming to the defense of the various accused. Cousin Carl, who was certainly not in perfect sympathy with his difficult poet relation, did continue for the last years of Heine's life (and the thirty years more of his widow's survival) the allowance that his father had granted Heine. And if Campe did struggle with Heine about royalties, and did commit the indefensible sin for a publisher of pledging to publish anything Heine wrote and then reneging on his promise, he was also a tireless promoter of Heine's work, and took chances for Heine with the German censors that clearly went beyond mere questions of

Barry Goldwater

Robert Alan Goldberg



"Extremely **well-researched and well-written**.... Meticulously even-handed....Disturbing revelations about [Goldwater's] intellectual abilities and his independence of mind."
—John B. Judis, *Washington Post Book World*

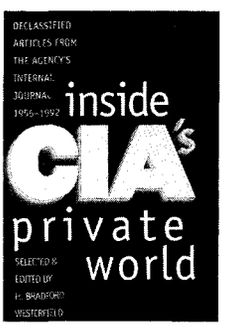
"Goldberg's **splendid biography** accurately depicts the man and his times, heightening our understanding of the Arizonan's achievements and the backdrop of his meteoric success."
—Stanley I. Kutler, *Chicago Tribune*

"Far and away the **best biography to date** of the most important presidential loser of the twentieth century." —*Booklist* 28 illus. $27.50

Inside CIA's Private World

Declassified Articles from the Agency's Internal Journal, 1955-1992

Selected and edited by H. Bradford Westerfield


DECLASSIFIED ARTICLES FROM THE AGENCY'S INTERNAL JOURNAL 1955-1992
inside CIA's private world
SELECTED & EDITED BY H. BRADFORD WESTERFIELD

"Provides new insights into the role played by intelligence during the Cold War. It is a **fascinating** glimpse into the CIA's past."—David L. Boren

"A brilliant selection from the CIA's secret cold war archive—**gripping**, haunting, intellectually challenging, and as tantalizing as le Carré."
—Bob Woodward 26 illus. $35.00

The Rise of Neoconservatism

Intellectuals and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1994

John Ehrman

"A **lucid** account of the postwar rise of neoconservatives and their eventual migration from liberal Democrats to Republicans, despite little ideological shift."—*Publishers Weekly*

"Ehrman tells **an eventful story** succinctly and...impartially."
—George H. Nash, *The New York Times Book Review* $27.50

Yale University Press
P.O. Box 209040, New Haven, CT 06520
At fine bookstores or call 1-800-YUP-READ

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

profit. And Mathilde, whom Pawel all but accuses of infidelity, and whose disappearance for a month immediately after Heine's death he finds despicable and unpardonable, was a healthy young woman who, after all, lived with Heine for eight years after he had become an invalid, and sexually dysfunctional by his own account. That she would have felt released enough by the end of Heine's endless dying to leave Paris was odd, but even if she did go away, as Marx snarled, with her "pimp," we might at least try to understand her.

Pawel even manages to attack Heine, or at least his "more problematic character traits": "the flashes of paranoia, the unrestrained viciousness of his personal attacks on enemies or friends he felt had wronged him, his propensity to desecrate his pen ... in ... infantile temper tantrums...." In all the standard studies of Heine—the best is *Heinrich Heine, A Modern Biography* by Jeffrey L. Sammons—we get the sense that Heine was a difficult person. He was constantly provoking scandals and was thin-skinned enough to have been involved in a number of duels, but he was also endlessly interesting, " ... a man of unruly but noble character," as he himself said of Liszt. Though he seemed to have few intimate friends, he knew everyone, from Goethe to Balzac, from Chopin to Wagner, from George Sand to Hans Christian Andersen, from Marx to the Rothschilds. In his youth he worshiped Napoleon and adored all that the French Revolution stood for; but in the course of his life he had to witness its ideals betrayed, in the reaction of 1830 and the more serious conservative triumph after the 1848 turmoil, which he seemed almost unable to bring himself to behold, so much a violation was it of his old aspirations.

Though he consistently managed to offend popular notions of decorum, both personal and political, he was a passionate democrat, and one of the clear purposes of his poetry and prose was to undermine bourgeois and aristocratic hypocrisy, to make a literature that would be more accessible and more truthful. He wrote variations of old fairy tales, which he believed incorporated lost popular wisdom, and generated new ones. (Wagner used two of his poems, "Tannhäuser" and "The Flying Dutchman," as the basis of operas, and later, as his anti-Semitism became virulent, repudiated his debt to Heine. The Nazis, when they burned Heine's books and banished him from the anthologies, had to preserve "Lorelei" under "author unknown," because the poem had become so integral a part of the German national identity.)

Heine said he didn't approve of "political poetry," because he felt that nearly all the polemical poetry of his time was tainted by the rot of nationalism, but most of his work was profoundly engaged. He wrote the most effective and enduring German political poem of the century, "The Silesian Weavers," which became an anthem for disaffected workers. (Engels translated it into English.) And he even composed a poem about the slave-trade to the Americas, "The Slave Ship," one of his few poems that comes into English with no excuses. (Both works are included in the Pawel volume, in a sheaf of poems appended to the text. Pawel reprints the Hal Draper versions of the poems to which he refers, a useful device in a biography of a poet.)

"The Slave Ship" is brilliant, an almost surreal narrative about a slave-trader in despair because the profits of his Rio-bound ship are threatened by his cargo dying off. The ship's doctor diagnoses the problem by saying that it's the blacks' "own fault," that their "melancholia ... bores them to death." He prescribes music and dancing for the slaves, and in a scene like something from a wilder *Benito Cereno*, the slaves dance and make love as music is played by the crew, as sharks prowl below, wondering why they haven't received their usual breakfast of dead slaves, and the captain prays:

> "Oh, spare their lives for Jesus' sake
> Who did not die in vain!
> If I don't end up with three hundred head,
> My business goes down the drain."

Though he never participated directly in any of the great political upheavals of his time, he observed them and commented on them with a fierce independence. He was a man of the left, a liberal, and was even a Saint-Simonian for a period when he first came to visit Paris in 1831, before he was definitively exiled from the German states; and he always shared with the left a genuine indignation at the mistreatment of the common people. In his work, however, he was mistrustful of both right and left, and his refusal to take definitive positions left him, as his sometime friend Ludwig Borne noted, with "two backs," abused by both aristocratic and radical factions.

The various governments of the German-speaking states felt threatened enough by his writing to ban most of his books (Metternich made it a personal cause) and finally to banish Heine himself from their borders; and so he lived the last twenty-five years of his life in France. But most of the radicals considered him inadequately revolutionary, and he was as trenchant about the left as about the right, and as prescient. "Communism," he wrote, "is the secret name, the frightful antagonist which opposes to the contemporary bourgeois regime proletarian rule with all its consequences ... The dismal hero to whom is assigned a great, if only temporary role in the modern tragedy...." He was drawn to rabble-rousers like Cobbett; but when Cobbett printed a scurrilous anti-Semitic attack, Heine was confirmed in his fears that popular radicalism would generate such monstrosities.

But the project of his writing really went beyond all that. Heine's aesthetic and spiritual purpose was what he called "sensualism," a reassertion of the rights of matter and the body, in art and society. He called for a poetry of "the most self-intoxicated subjectivity, world-unbridled individuality, the divinely free personality with all its love of life." He was like Whitman in his vision of a society in which art and poetry would free the individual from ancient habits of social passivity, and increase the dimensions and intensity of human aspiration and emotion. (Whitman exulted, "Heine was free ... one of the men who win by degrees.") If Heine's poems and songs were often about lost love, that love was never the bloodless aristocratic nostalgia of romanticism: it was rich with physicality and erotic ardor. There are scores of love affairs in his poems, and scores of women. He sings of escapades with the most timid maidens and the boldest matrons: one poem recounts a memorable adventure with a mother and a daughter.

Given the larger ends that he saw for his poetry, it is ironic (and he thought so, too) that the greater part of his fame rested on those gorgeous songs which concerned a few probably fictional amorous episodes of his youth. He considered the poetic perfection of those songs an essential part of his moral undertaking, but he sometimes sounds almost plaintive in trying to reassert the depths of his commitment to his social ideals. "Whether people praise or fault my songs concerns me little. But you shall lay a sword on my coffin, for I was a good soldier in mankind's war of liberation."

That coffin was hard-earned. Heine died a truly terrifying death—from syphilis, he thought, though modern medicine has cast doubt upon that diagnosis. Parts of his body were paralyzed, restored to use and paralyzed again, and finally he became a helpless

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Catholic Church: the Whore of Babylon?

No. But as Harvard historian Arthur Schlesinger Sr. observed, prejudice against the Catholic Church is "the deepest bias in the history of the American people."

For example, among fundamentalists there's that whopper of a myth that the Pope is the Anti-Christ, the Catholic Church is the Whore of Babylon, and Catholics aren't really Christians. Among the politically correct there's the sneering calumny that Catholicism is anti-woman, sexually fascist, and basically for cave-dwelling ignoramuses.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW aren't intimidated by the bigots. Rather, we present the authentic Catholic vision to an unfriendly culture in a forceful way. Not surprisingly, *Newsweek* finds us "cheeky." Amazingly, we're also ecumenical. We've been hailed by George Will, an Episcopalian, as "splendid," by the eminent evangelical theologian Carl F.H. Henry as "exceedingly well done." Many of the finest Catholic and non-Catholic thinkers have appeared in our pages: Walker Percy, Jean Bethke Elshtain, John T. Noonan Jr., Daniel Bell, Ronda Chervin, Christopher Lasch, Peter Kreeft, Juli Loesch Wiley, Robert Coles, John Lukacs, Robert Bellah, Sheldon Vanauken, Thomas Molnar, Avery Dulles, Amitai Etzioni, Will Campbell, Stanley Hauerwas.

We cover a wide range of issues, including the quest for a more just and humane world, but refuse to subordinate the faith to political ideology.

If you're looking for a Catholic monthly magazine that explodes stereotypes and sparkles with insight, we're for you. We've been acclaimed by Martin E. Marty for "inducing fresh thought," by *Utne Reader* as "surprisingly original," by *National Review* as "first-rate," by *Library Journal* as "brilliant," and by Christopher Derrick, England's foremost Catholic apologist, as "by far the best Catholic magazine in the English-speaking world." Frankly, we're "influential," to quote the *Los Angeles Times*.

Whether or not you're Catholic, enjoy our intellectual fireworks by subscribing now!

(Please allow 2 to 8 weeks for delivery of first issue)

SPECIAL DISCOUNT RATES FOR FIRST-TIME SUBSCRIBERS

- ☐ One-year subscription. . . . . .$14 (regularly $19)
- ☐ One-year student, unemployed, or retired person's subscription . . . . . .$12 (regularly $16)
- ☐ Two-year subscription . . . . .$23 (regularly $35)
- ☐ One-year non-U.S. subscription . . . . . US$24 (regularly $29) Payment must be drawn in U.S. Dollars
- ☐ Sample copy. $3.50

Send coupon or letter. Make check payable to NEW OXFORD REVIEW. Mail to:

NAME (Please print or type)

STREET ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP CODE

NEW OXFORD REVIEW
Room 817
1069 Kains Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94706

PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

invalid, a living skeleton, racked with pain through most of his last eight years, finding relief only in morphine, which was administered to him through sores kept open for that purpose on his back. To read or write, he often had to hold one of his eyelids propped open, and sometimes he could hardly speak. But despite all this, and despite the stream of visitors that came from all over Europe to pay homage to the world-famous poet, he wrote, and wrote, and wrote: poetry during his mostly sleepless nights, prose the rest of the time.

The report of Heine's final moments should certainly be inscribed in the book of last words said *to* the dying. Trying to the very end to write, he kept asking his nurse to take dictation. She couldn't, but reassured him: "When you stop throwing up, you'll write yourself." It is a shock to realize that when he did finally die, he was 58. Pawel accomplishes the death-bed transformation that Heine himself mocked and despised: by the end he seems reinvested with a kind of innocence; his fantasy love-affair with "La Mouche" has about it the pathetic mortal longing of Keats for his Fanny. The ordeal of his dying burned off much of Heine's desperate narcissism, and at least some of the sardonic cruelty which could afflict his skepticism.

But that skepticism was always less savage than it appeared. In a poem occasioned by a visit to Heine's grave, Matthew Arnold caustically wrote that Heine had been destined "only to laugh and to die." This is unfair. Heine's edge was the edge of a great humanist. Indeed, there was so much hope for humanity in Heine's criticism that it seems almost religious in its impulse. The converted Jew who was a dedicated Deist for most of his life returned finally to a personal god, in whom he claimed to believe with a child-like simplicity but toward whom he was not entirely affectionate: " ... this great tormentor of animals," he called him. But Heine's mature spiritual convictions were clearly grounded in his skepticism. The fury of his attacks on human folly and human cruelty were animated by a profound affirmation, a cry against the disappointments that so much of the history he lived had brought him.

Our own skepticism is even more fretful and thoroughgoing than his. History has proved even darker than Heine believed it to be, and the affirmations that we salvage from it have been tempered by grimmer denials than he could have imagined, despite his famous prophecy that where books are burned, people will be burned, too. When we contemplate the energy with which Heine lived and the admirable stoicism of his dying, when we study his poetry, which even in translation begins to regenerate the music of its fervent intentions, he does indeed become heroic, a writer of enormous moral and intellectual power, an ardent and inspiring idealist.

C.K. WILLIAMS's *Selected Poems* was recently published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. He teaches at Princeton University.

The Floating World

BY STANLEY KAUFFMANN

The Unconsoled by Kazuo Ishiguro

(Knopf, 535 pp., $25)

Those who were lucky enough, or smart enough, to read Kazuo Ishiguro's first three novels in order of publication came to the third one, *The Remains of the Day*, with an advantage over the rest of us. Ishiguro was born in Japan and he has lived in England since he was five. (He is now 41.) To those who began with the third book, including myself, Ishiguro's huge cultural shift made that very English novel remarkable for what I would now call misconstrued reasons: we thought it an extraordinary feat of osmosis. But viewed through the perspective of his first two books, *The Remains of the Day*, wonderful anyway, seems even better.

Ishiguro's first novel, *A Pale View of the Hills* (1982), focuses on a Japanese woman now living in England, one of whose daughters has recently committed suicide and whose other daughter is in difficulties. The story interweaves the woman's past life in post-war Nagasaki with her subsequent English life and brings the braiding up to the present. The book concludes with a sudden, startling enigma. (That puzzle, though presumably this was not in Ishiguro's mind at the time, prefigures his latest, fourth novel.)

In his second novel, *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), that world is the pre-war "night-time world of pleasure, entertainment and drink" in a Japanese city. This world was the chief background for the youthful paintings of the now-elderly painter who is the protagonist. But the phrase has taken on another resonance. Like the first book, the "present" of the novel is post-war; the protagonist and his artist-contemporaries feel some guilt about their work before the war that may have inflamed jingoistic feelings. One of the painters commits suicide in remorse. The "floating world," particularly as dangled before us by the title, comes to reflect other glints, other kinds of delusory gratification.

Ishiguro's first two books are masterly, in several ways. In each, the control is flawless without seeming arbitrary: every incident, every comma, appears to fit. Balance and rhythm are just, and in a gentle, oblique way, the story amplifies in texture. Remarks, observations, small incidents heighten our interest without the use of anything as crass as overt suspense. Yet the salient quality of these books is their method of characterization. Ishiguro doesn't use much physical description or interior delving. These people become familiar by the shapes of their lives—the way they choose and care, their daily routines, their harboring or shedding of grievances, even their liking of particular foods and their skill in cooking.

With many novelists, including some great ones, we sense that the author is carefully presenting his characters; at its crudest, it's the puppetmaster putting on a play. With Ishiguro, it's quite different. In these two books, he doesn't present his characters, he nestles among them. He watches them, respects them, obeys them, and conveys to us quietly what they tell him. He seems almost to chat with them from time to time "off-stage."

The quietness is the key. The children in these two books make some noise, but only the children. Ishiguro treats them with cunning, as citizens of a tangential world distinct from that of their parents and elders. Sometimes they permit their elders to enter, sometimes not; and often they are rackety. Except for their racket, the air of these two books is quiet. One of Ishiguro's triumphs is that their considerable range of emotion is brought close without a lot of fuss.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

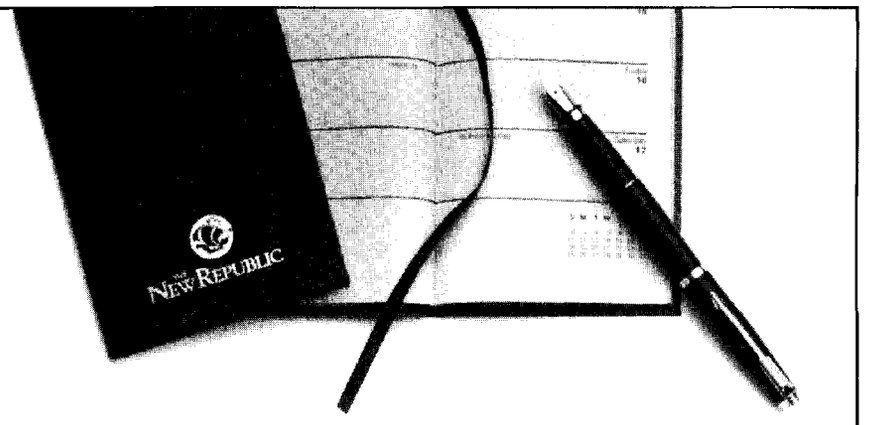
To arrive at *The Remains of the Day* (1989) through the avenue of the first two books is, peculiarly, to be both unsurprised and newly impressed. The "Japanese" qualities of the first two books—the taciturnity, the subtle brush strokes, the aim to evoke form rather than create it—persist. We cannot be quite so acutely aware of these qualities without knowledge of the earlier books; in this aspect the third novel grows directly from the first two. Yet, along with those persisting qualities from the past, Ishiguro is a secret member of a household in an utterly different culture. His Japanese past helped him to get there.

Darlington Hall, his main venue, has its own intricate grid of protocols. They have some analogies with Japanese social behavior, but it would be gross to call the two sets similar. Still, the third book has no whiff of exploration or discovery: Stevens, the butler, is as intimate to Ishiguro as any character he has written. This conviction is continually certified throughout the book because we see and hear everything through Stevens. Without tremor or cleverness, the book exists through the existence of Stevens. This fact becomes all the more telling, more moving, when we realize that through his eyes and ears we are seeing and hearing more than he ever comprehends.

About *The Remains of the Day* it is possible to risk the word "perfect." The book's special beauty is that it is a political allegory, bitter and sad, without losing any ground as a full-bodied novel. It has been compared favorably with Henry James; I would add Evelyn Waugh, Henry Green, Ivy Compton-Burnett and Anthony Powell. Ishiguro's book belongs with the best of English fiction that treats the English class system with combined satire and relish, with perception of both its cruelty and its rigorous ethos, as a distillation of English history.

Passage through the first two Ishiguro novels is a fruitful way to reach the third. Passage through all three of those novels is helpful, though in a quite different way, for the fourth. To begin with a blunt fact: we know, when we pick it up, that *The Unconsoled* is a departure for its author because of its size, 535 pages. His longest previous book was 245 pages. Familiarity with his previous style—laconic loveliness, space compacted for intensity—makes us immediately curious about the differences we will discover.

They start to appear at once. The setting is Europe. On the first page a man named Ryder, whose first-person narrative this is, arrives at a hotel in an unspecified city. (It remains so.) The magazines in the lobby rack are in several languages,



ANNOUNCING
THE NEW REPUBLIC
1996 POCKET DIARY

For the past few years, we have been giving pocket diaries, embossed in gold with The New Republic name and logo, to our writers and editors and special friends in the media. The diaries have been so popular that we have decided to make them available to our subscribers at a low cost, only $11.95 each.

The diaries are made by Letts of London, whose diaries were favored by Charles Dickens and George Bernard Shaw. Each Diary includes weekly calendars with space to write down daily appointments, plus a wine vintage chart, a list of important toll-free telephone numbers, and addresses, and more.

The pages are edged in gilt and carry a silken page marker. The diary itself is dark blue with featherweight light-blue pages.

It's elegant and easy to use. The cost to non-subscribers is $13.95, but we're offering it to subscribers for just $11.95, *including* postage.

AVAILABLE TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS
FOR A LIMITED TIME

YES, Send me the New Republic pocket diary immediately. (Please allow 2 to 4 weeks for delivery.)

❑ I am a subscriber, $11.95
❑ I am not a subscriber, $13.95

Name_____
Address_____
City_____ State____ Zip_____

Write to: Pocket Diary, The New Republic, Dept. C,
1220 19th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036

Check or Money-Order must accompany each order

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and the names we begin to hear are German. After Ryder has registered, he is taken up in the elevator by an old porter, Gustav, who carries his bags and doesn't set them down as they ascend. His face is growing red with the strain: Ryder urges him to set down the bags. "I'm glad you mention it, sir," says Gustav, then launches into a four-page explanation of the portering principles involved and the resolution of the porters in this city to abide by them. He even mentions the café where the porters meet to discuss these things. He concludes: "I'm sure Miss Hilde will vouch for what I'm saying." Then Ryder notices a young woman behind him. She, too, then speaks at length—about the attractions of the city and about the preparation of Ryder's schedule, though we don't yet quite know why there is a schedule.

Sensors flash in us. We have recognized already that the style has changed: the loquacity of those monologues is in stark contrast to the honed dialogue in the previous books. But more basically, the criteria of realism have shifted. Gustav's and Miss Hilde's comments are so lengthy that the elevators would have had to climb to the top of the World Trade Center, slowly, for those two to have time to speak them. Miss Hilde could not possibly have been unnoticed by Ryder when he entered the elevator. Ishiguro patently wants these factual distortions to strike us: traditional realism is not to be this book's habitat. Yet the details are veristic.

This contradiction, plus the first tremblings of mystery around the seemingly commonplace, plus the scent of Middle Europe in the atmosphere, make our literary radar signal: Kafka. But this perception doesn't take much subtlety on our part. Ishiguro wants us to know that he has taken a master for this book. (Later he calls one of the streets in this city Walserstrasse. Robert Walser, the Swiss author who began publishing a few years before Kafka, was often compared to his junior; when Kafka's work first appeared, some readers thought that Franz Kafka was a pseudonym for Robert Walser.)

Before the first chapter is ended, Ishiguro has fixed his book in the realm of paradox that uses veristic minutiae to tack down the edges of billowing non-realism. Erich Heller says: "Kafka's style—simple, lucid, and 'real' in the sense of never leaving any doubt concerning the reality of that which is narrated, described, or meditated—does yet narrate, describe or meditate the shockingly unbelievable." This might have been Ishiguro's motto for his book. We learn that Ryder, whose first name is never mentioned, is an English pianist; he is to appear in a few days in a concert over which the city is making a to-do. A great deal happens in those few days, all of it couched in that ballooning/contracting sense of time, that melting/solidifying sense of place that quickly become integral in the book.

Another surreal element is soon added. The day of his arrival, when Ryder wanders into the square where the porters' café is located, he sees a woman around 40 and her small son seated there. Gustav had told Ryder that they might be there, his daughter and grandson, Sophie and Boris. She waves at Ryder, which surprises him, and when he goes over, she addresses him by name. In a moment Sophie asks Boris to go off for a bit; then she talks to Ryder about a house she is buying for him and her and Boris. Instead of asking what in the world she means, Ryder slips, slides, into acceptance of this new circumstance in his life:

> She began to give me more details about the house. I remained silent, but only because of my uncertainty as to how I should respond. For the fact was, as we had been sitting together, Sophie's face had come to seem steadily more familiar to me, until now I thought I could even remember vaguely some earlier discussions about buying just such a house in the woods.

Other instances of Ryder's malleable consciousness soon occur, not as if he were being dragooned into accepting something but as if he were vaporously recalling it. This phenomenon strongly suggests another influence on Ishiguro: Pinter, especially *Old Times*. In Pinter's play, states of being, consistent in themselves, overlap other, contradictory states of being and memory in the same person—a kind of interior cubism. After these overlappings have gone on for a bit in the play, a woman says:

> There are some things one remembers even though they may never have happened. There are things I remember that may never have happened, but as I recall them so they take place.

This is one of the insistent modes of Ishiguro's novel. (It's worth noting, not as proof but as linkage, that Pinter was for a time involved in the screen adaptation of *The Remains of the Day*.)

The café encounter is the merest corner of the long, complexly layered journey-saga that Ryder undergoes before the evening of the concert, and it doesn't end there. The hotel manager, Hoffman, his wife, and their pianist son Stephan; the conductor Brodsky and his estranged wife; some boyhood chums, now grown, from his English schooldays—these and many, many more wander in and out. Almost everyone whom Ryder meets wants something from him: Hoffman wants him to look at his wife's albums of clippings about Ryder's career, Stephan wants Ryder to listen to his playing, Gustav wants Ryder to say something in public at the concert about the conditions of the porters; and more.

In the course of the book Ryder travels about on foot, by car, by tram, and he moves, suddenly and almost every time, from crowded streets to lonely countryside, from busy rooms into straitened corridors, all these transitions melding into a vivid but intentionally unreliable continuum of place. Added to this kaleidoscopic geography are multiple points of view—in a first-person narrative. A man who is driving Ryder somewhere parks in

Circle

When I think *circle* I can choose the sun
As illustration, I can choose the moon,
Or, nearer home, I can imagine one
Unblemished orange shining in my hand,
And, shutting out the life behind me, soon
There's only *form* for me to understand:
As illustration, I can choose the moon
When I think *circle*, I can choose the sun.
Behind me is the long defeat that led,
As smoothly as the settling of two butterflies
Upon a stone, to the acceptance that instead
Of holding on, I let you go — as if my eyes
Could close on memory, except for one
Last look at orange light to linger on,
Whose circle will remain when sun and moon are gone.

ROBERT PACK

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

front of a house and asks to be excused for a minute while he goes inside. Ryder, sitting in the car, then sees and hears the conversation deep within the house.

These dissolvings of one place into another, this super-vision, suggest film. (The English paperbound editions of Ishiguro's work mention his "keen interest in the cinema.") The book has other filmic touches, of Bergman particularly. When the child Boris wanders in the hotel corridors, we think of *The Silence*; with the quasi-phantom classroom, *Wild Strawberries*. Several film references are frank. In Ishiguro's city there is Sternberg Garden; the city's "most senior" actor is named Jannings; a modern composer is named Kazan. Valentino and Groucho Marx are used as points of reference. *2001: A Space Odyssey* is mentioned a few times. (With the wrong cast. This is deliberate, I'm sure, but no reason for this "mistake" is apparent.)

Like Kafka before him, Ishiguro conveys the immanence of a kind of spectral humor throughout, and sometimes that humor bulges into the foreground. (Just before the concert, Brodsky, the conductor, is in a car accident, pinned by his leg. The doctors have to amputate the leg to free him, but the leg they cut off is wooden. He appears on stage at the concert using an ironing board as an improvised crutch.) Unlike Kafka, however, Ishiguro, no hunger artist, frequently uses food for homely sensuality, even more than in his first two books. From the mention of strudel in the first chapter to the closing scene on a tram where a lavish buffet breakfast is being served, food figures.

The incongruence of that setting for a buffet is part of another technique in the book: disproportion. Of the numerous instances, here are two. It's disproportionate that, on the very evening of the recital, just before Ryder is to play, Hoffman insists on showing him his wife's albums; or that, for other reasons, Ryder gets lengthily sidetracked before he is to go on. And after all the disproportions, after all the frustrations and divagations, the story winds its way to the concert itself. Which, unsurprisingly, does not proceed as planned. The book leaves us with Ryder presumably en route to his next engagement in Helsinki.

It also leaves us with an ache of disappointment that has been growing in us as we read. Very early we realize that, as against earlier Ishiguro, we are not to savor character development. The author cannot nestle among his characters here, because there are none: there are only supposedly signifying figures. Neither are we to be absorbed in deepening narrative; one episode follows another with no cause except the author's mandate. We read along because we expect that all these teasings and suggestings, in the hands of a fine writer, will lead to thematic, aesthetic completion. But Ryder simply passes through it all on his way to Helsinki. None of it, not Sophie or Boris or anything else, affects him lastingly. Central though he is, Ryder is only one more of the book's charade figures.

But what is the charade about? Erich Heller observed that "there is only one way to save oneself the trouble of interpreting *The Trial*: not to read it." Ishiguro lays the same exigency on us, but without much reward. This is not to belabor him with the need to equal Kafka: it is to point out that, for all his skill, he has followed his model incompletely.

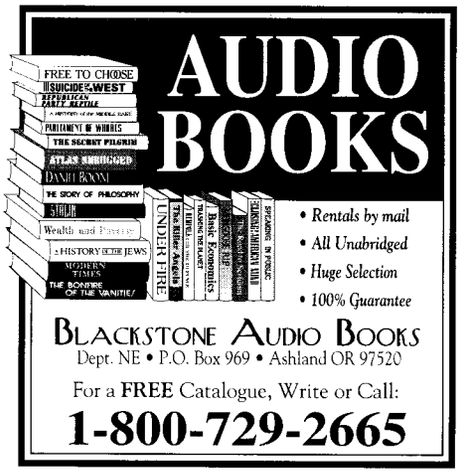
Finally, desperately, we ask: Is this whole book a dream? That facile *raison d'être* must be considered, especially since the book is laced with sleep. Chapter Two begins: "When I was roused by the bedside telephone, I had the impression that it had been ringing for some time." Chapter Ten, too, begins with the telephone waking him. Parts Two and Three and Four begin with nearly identical sentences about waking with the fear of having slept too long. But, among other questions about such an interpretation, did Ryder dream all those extensive monologues that other people deliver? (He never speaks one himself.) After a while they seem less like instruments of prose than like elements in graphic design, as a designer might use blocks of black, except that in this case we must traverse them, inch by inch. They crush the suggestion of dream with their sheer black weight.

Anyway, to tag this book a dream is not to justify it, only to alter its unfulfilled debt. We may indeed be such stuff as dreams are made on, but before our little lives are rounded with a sleep, those dreams affect us with agony and exultation. Ishiguro's book does not. It parades its episodes before us. We feel little.

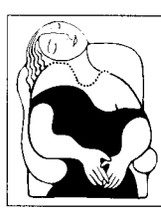
And the title doesn't help. *The Unconsoled* explains nothing. The word "consolation" occurs only a few times, in connection with Brodsky, his music, his lady love, and a wound of his that will not heal. (Hinting at Amfortas in *Parsifal*? ... But enough puzzle-solving.) The people in this book are no more stringently unconsoled in any sense than many of us.

The book's most plausible meaning is its very existence. To put it otherwise, it opens a new territory in Ishiguro's interests, even if it doesn't prevail in that territory. If Ishiguro's two "Japanese" novels help us to appreciate *The Remains of the Day*, then all three of his preceding novels, taken together, are the best available justification of the fourth. He has moved from the taciturn beauty of the earlier books to a larger scope, a much more explicitly intricate structure—a move from Japan and Britain to the heart of Middle Europe. Previously, he dealt with the psychological and spiritual aftermath of World War II in Japan, then with English confusions and self-betrayals in that war. Now he moves to the continent, to the involuted psyche and spirit that was the root of much of that war, that bred most of our culture and also of our horror.

Ryder, the English artist, enters a shadowy European city. Ishiguro, another English artist, enters the morass of the European novel. We may wonder what will happen to the rest of Ryder's career. With a great deal more hope, we may ask the same question about the extraordinary Ishiguro. •

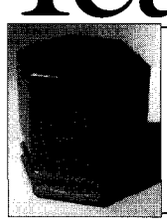


Have you noticed IRA has taken over "Anglophile" *NY Times*?—when it isn't publishing London/Dublin communiques in lieu of analysis. *NYT* LETTERS allows only IRA or UK diplomats. Help Northern Ireland democratic pluralists opposed to terrorist diktat for "Hongkongized" Ulster. **Network for a New Union and Labor in Northern Ireland. Write: 22 Gates Street, Greenlawn, NY 11740 516-757-1769**



GOOD VIBRATIONS
Friendly, informative catalogs of sex toys, books & videos. $4, applied toward first order.
1210 Valencia #NR,
San Francisco, CA 94110

TeaBox



$19.95 EXCELLENT GIFT!
SOLID WALNUT
VISA/MC Add $4 for Ship. & Hand.
GALATEA
1-800-876-3172
HANDMADE IN RUSSIA

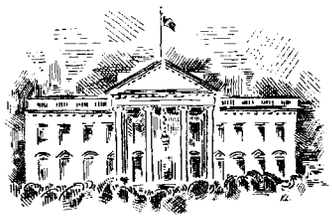
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Brothers

IT WAS A PERFECT MORNING, AND the brothers, of whom I am not one, did not seem to mind that I was among them. The cantillations of a muezzin bounced gently off the Washington Monument, and near the steps of the National Gallery I heard an African flute playing "A Love Supreme": the acoustics of the new America. The sight of cheerful and purposeful black men gathering in the sunlight by the tens of thousands stirred me. Their massified acknowledgment of the emergency in which they find themselves seemed to shrink it, however slightly. Milling about the Million Man March in its early hours, I resisted my melancholy, and set out to see more than I was expecting to see. I knew much about Farrakhan, but I knew little about the citizens who surrounded me. We had never really met, which is why, my race-fatigue notwithstanding, I was there. At day's end, I left with an indelible sense of another reality, which was humbling. As the hours wore on, however, my melancholy returned. By late afternoon, the weather, too, had changed. There was a chill in the air. I watched the clouding of the clear sky, and by the time the Minister appeared the Mall was thrown into shadows. They were not dispelled.

SOME OBSERVATIONS. AS THE GRIM and natty young men of the Nation of Islam filed by, they looked like human italics. I was struck by the wavering, unwavering look in their eyes; they had the exaggerated self-possession of people under orders, the hard and thin self-esteem of individuals who are not individuals, who have been told what is above them and what is below them, and not to look to the side. I was startled to hear Betty Shabazz speak as "a widow and single-parent myself" at the apotheosis of the man who is believed to have widowed her. (I didn't hear Malcolm's name anywhere, though this was *his* day.) The rhyming doggerel of Dr. Angelou was delightful. As one speaker after another thundered and rasped in churchly cadences, and toiled to engage the crowd in call and response, I noted the limitations of preacherliness, the ease with which the homiletical method becomes a manner, and puts music in the place of thought. The crowd did not kindle to the Reverend Jesse Jackson as a moral authority, as it kindled to the Reverend Al Sharpton. A slender black man gave testimony that a substance from Kenya cured him of HIV. (My doubts must have been showing, because the brother next to me said loudly to the brother next to him: "There's a Satan in the house.") A sensation of unity was everywhere, but sensations are fleeting; and the unity of a crowd, any crowd, is not really unity, it is synchronicity, which is not a pretty sight. Four hundred thousand men standing shoulder to shoulder, row upon row, as far as the eye could see, moving back a step when asked to, raising their fists in unison: this was an authoritarian choreography. And so the spirit of self-examination gradually surrendered to the spirit of self-love. Crowds do not form to feel bad.



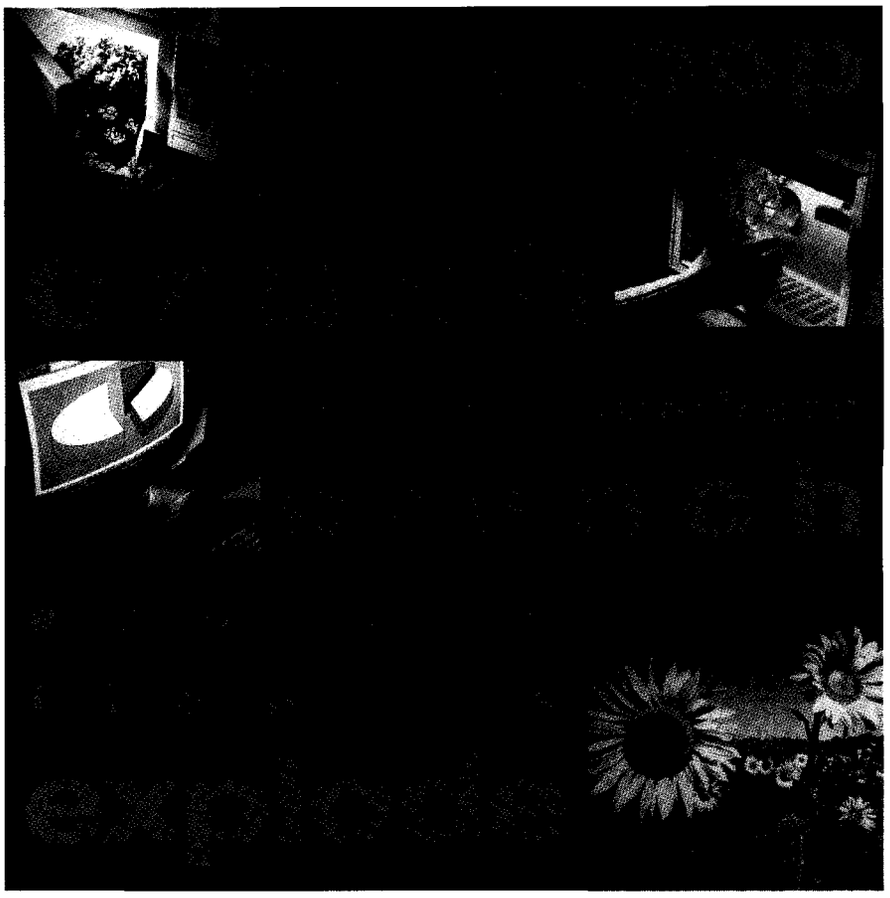
TYNETA MUHAMMAD, the widow of Elijah Muhammad, appeared in a white habit and offered some thoughts about atonement. She mentioned Yom Kippur, which put me in mind of the Jewish tradition of repentance. It is an axiom of that tradition that, for a sin against your fellow man, you cannot atone to God or to yourself, you can atone only to your fellow man. But where was the fellow woman? She was not welcome at Farrakhan's *rappel à l'ordre.* Farrakhan's instruction to black men was: go back to your homes, for there you will have dominion. "The black woman must be able to see her husband, her brother, her father, and her son go to battle for justice like a man," said a T-shirt a few rows in front of me. This cannot be right. The black woman must be able to see her husband, her brother, her father, and her son look her in the eye and say that he is sorry. Atonement is not an expression of masculinity, it is an expression of humanity. Male bonding is not a part of the solution, it is a part of the problem. "The black man is God," a preacher exhorted the congregation on the Mall. I know what he was meaning to say, but he did not hear the antithetical meanings in his words. I remembered the sick last chapter of *Soul on Ice.* ("Across the naked abyss of negated masculinity, of four hundred years minus my Balls, we face each other today, my Queen. I want you to know that I feared to look into your eyes because I knew I would find reflected there a merciless indictment of my impotence and a compelling challenge to redeem my conquered manhood.... Memories of yesterday will not assuage the torrents of blood that flow today from my crotch....") Manhood is a troublesome thing. Whatever else it is, it is not a foundation for decency. There was a terrible con fusion at the Million Man March between acting impotently and acting indecently, and no good will come of it.

FINALLY FARRAKHAN GAVE HIS "lecture." I was glad that the entire country was treated to his wild etymologies, his wild chronologies, his wild numerologies; but it was evident to me, as I observed the brothers around me hanging on his every utterance, that the strangeness of Farrakhan's discourse is what recommends it to them. It suits the strangeness of their own lives. (The gunning-down of children by children is not just another order of normality.) Despair is the friend of credulity. But here was this wicked man treating his own people like fools, for the purpose of his power. What is the difference, really, between telling African Americans that they will prosper outside the "cognitive elite" and telling African Americans that the way out of their crisis will be found in the esoteric properties of the number 19? Both are premised on the intellectual incompetence of blacks. Both are ways of encouraging that are really ways of discouraging.

FARRAKHAN CITED THE KERNER Commission Report, about two Americas. It was apposite, in the wake of the neo-Kernerism of the Simpson verdict. Everywhere we read that whites and blacks are not seeing the same things, owing to their different "life experiences." Race, in America, has become epistemology: there are white truths and black truths, but there is no truth. The philosopher Richard Rorty, who writes in the name of "we liberals," has made "perspectivism" popular in recent years, and proliferated the view that there is no objectivity, there is only solidarity. Well, welcome to perspectivist America. Lovely, isn't it? On the Mall I found myself in a sea of "life-experiences" unlike my own, and I saw that there is nothing more reactionary than the worship of "life-experiences." They are the beginning, not the end, of the story. Honor them all with the heart and pressure them all with the head. And there *is* a proper object for all the loathing in this country. That object is: race. Instead of race hatred, the hatred of race. Instead of the love of what is visible about the person, the love of what is invisible about the person. Instead of solidarity, objectivity. Otherwise the new America will be no America at all.

LEON WIESELTIER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



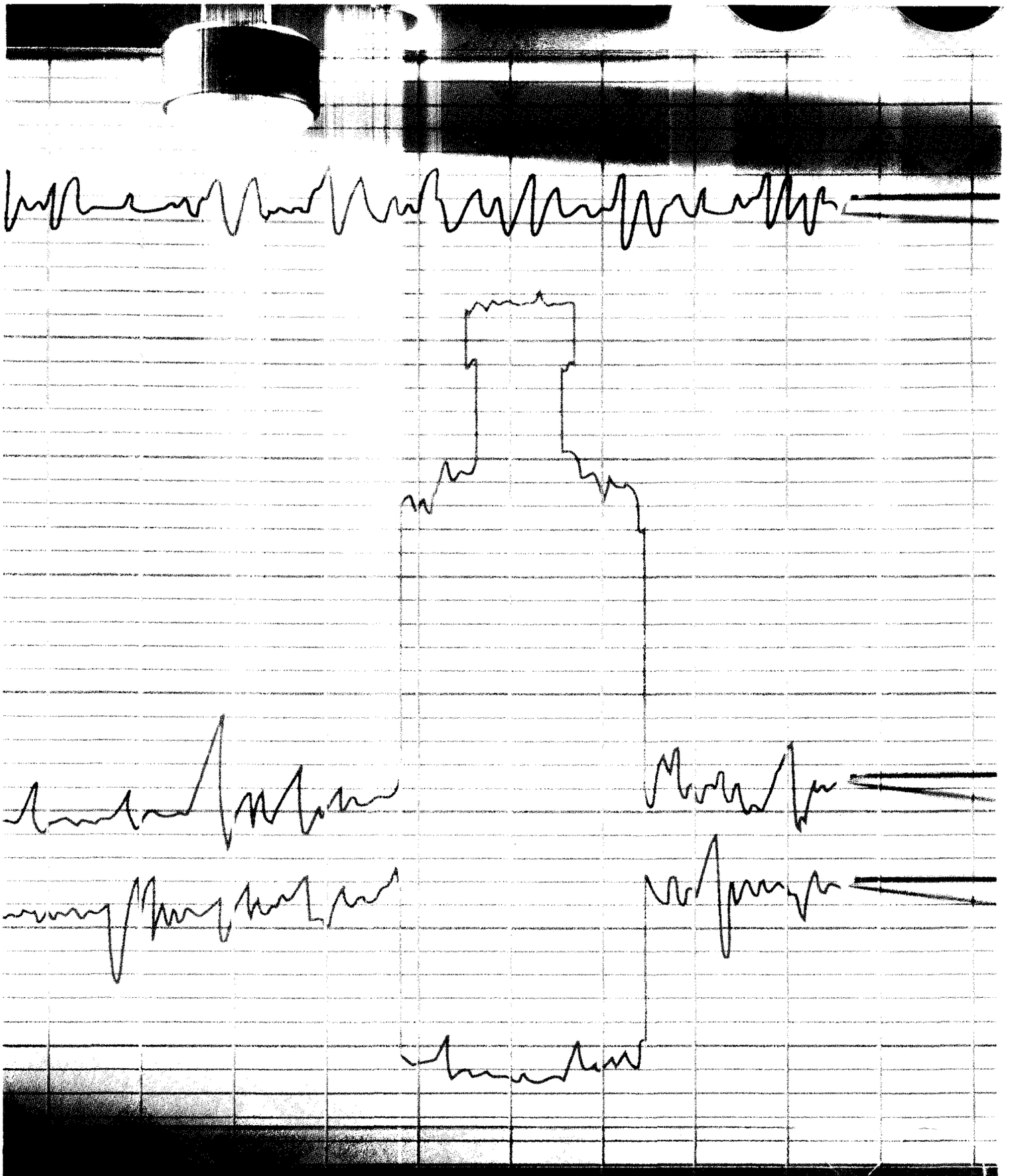
Today's electric technologies make life much more comfortable and convenient. They make us more productive. And they do it all with minimal impact on the environment. It's all the result of using energy more efficiently. ■ For example, microwave ovens use 90% less energy than conventional ovens. New super efficient refrigerators use 30% less energy than even 1993 models. (Their refrigeration systems are also CFC-free.) New LCD desktop computers consume 85% less power than regular desktops. ■ With such high energy efficiency, technologies like these are helping to reduce energy use. Which helps safeguard the planet. ■ Call Edison Electric Institute at 1-800-438-8334 to learn more about how electric technologies help improve how we live. And where we live.

Electricity

The power to make life better

© Edison Electric Institute ,1995

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



ABSOLUT® VODKA. PRODUCT OF SWEDEN. 40 AND 50% ALC/VOL (80 AND 100 PROOF). 100% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS. ABSOLUT COUNTRY OF SWEDEN VODKA & LOGO, ABSOLUT, ABSOLUT BOTTLE DESIGN AND ABSOLUT CALLIGRAPHY ARE TRADEMARKS OWNED BY V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. ©1995 V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. IMPORTED BY THE HOUSE OF SEAGRAM, NEW YORK, NY.
THOSE WHO APPRECIATE QUALITY ENJOY IT RESPONSIBLY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED